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X-MEN/ ALPHA FLIGHT
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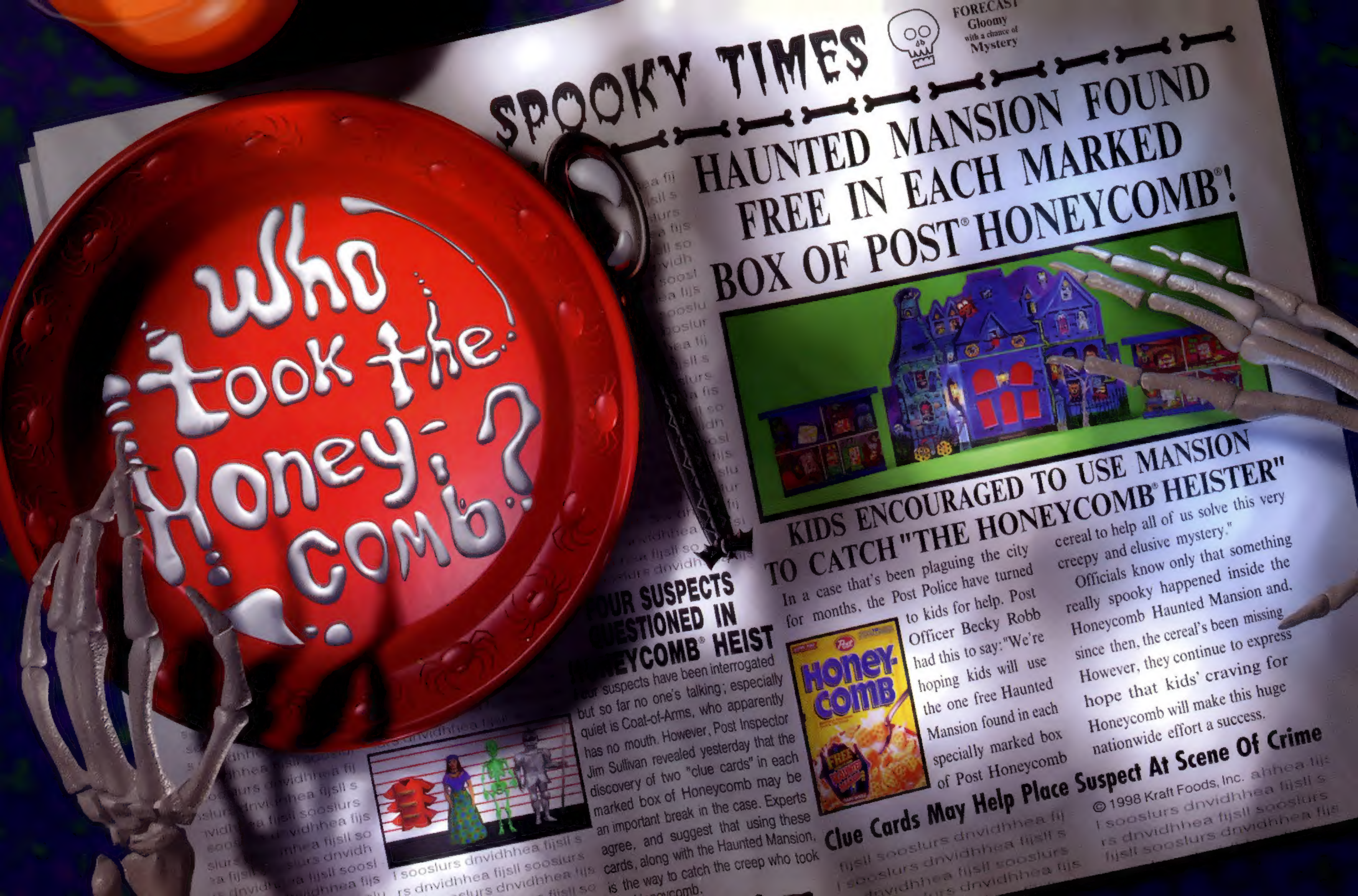
Who took the Honey-comb?
SPOOKY TIMES
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Gloomy
with a chance of
Mystery
HAUNTED MANSION FOUND FREE IN EACH MARKED BOX OF POST® HONEYCOMB®!
KIDS ENCOURAGED TO USE MANSION TO CATCH "THE HONEYCOMB® HEISTER"
In a case that's been plaguing the city for months, the Post Police have turned to kids for help. Post Officer Becky Robb had this to say: "We're hoping kids will use the one free Haunted Mansion found in each specially marked box of Post Honeycomb cereal to help all of us solve this very creepy and elusive mystery."
Officials know only that something really spooky happened inside the Honeycomb Haunted Mansion and, since then, the cereal's been missing. However, they continue to express hope that kids' craving for Honeycomb will make this huge nationwide effort a success.
OUR SUSPECTS
UESTIONED IN
EYCOMB® HEIST
ur suspects have been interrogated but so far no one's talking; especially quiet is Coat-of-Arms, who apparently has no mouth. However, Post Inspector Jim Sullivan revealed yesterday that the discovery of two "clue cards" in each marked box of Honeycomb may be an important break in the case. Experts agree, and suggest that using these cards, along with the Haunted Mansion, is the way to catch the creep who took
oneycomb.
Post
Honey-comb
Clue Cards May Help Place Suspect At Scene Of Crime
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STAN LEE PRESENTS MARVEL VISION #29

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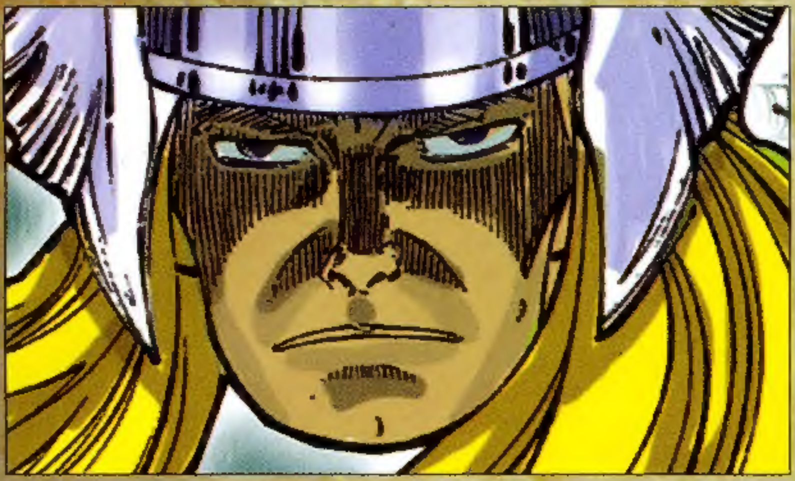

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"Tiger" who?

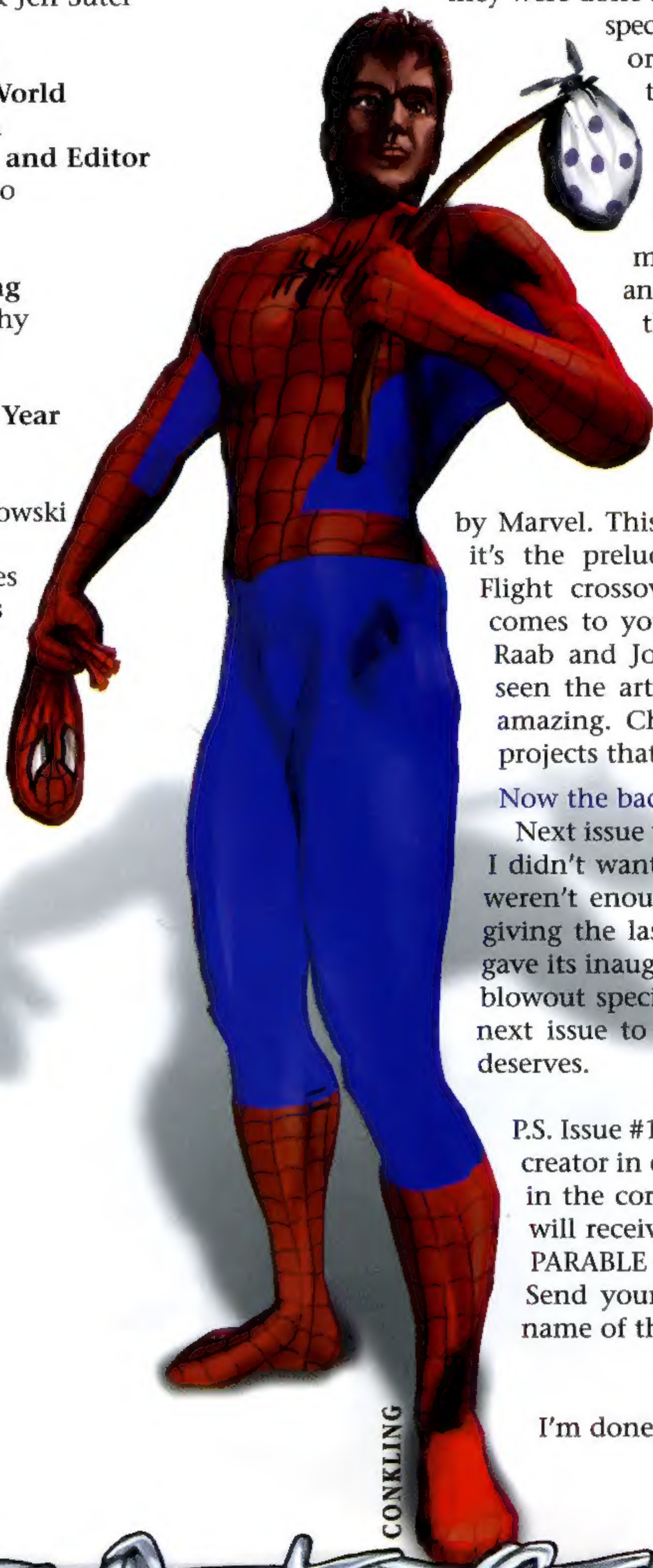
VISION

I've got some good news and some bad news...

First the good news—

When I was younger, they had just invented the wheel; I'm just kidding, I'm not really that old. As I was saying, way back when, before crossovers became required practice at comic companies, they were done sporadically, and they were really special. Crossovers back then developed organically from a story rather than being contrived around an event. One of these crossovers that made quite an impact on me was the X-Men/Alpha Flight two-issue crossover. This story in my humble opinion was amazing and the art justified my other opinion that Paul Smith was to be one of the best artists ever to grace the pages of any "X" book.

Well, that landmark series that had ties to the New Mutants book is being reprinted by Marvel. This is not just an ordinary reprint, it's the prelude to an all-new X-Men/Alpha Flight crossover coming in May. This book comes to you courtesy of Ben (EXCALIBUR) Raab and John (DESPERADOES) Cassaday. I've seen the art in the Mighty Bullpen and it's amazing. Check it out as well as the other projects that appear in this month's VISION.



Now the bad news—

Next issue will be the last of Marvel VISION. I didn't want it to end so soon but sales just weren't enough to support it. Julio and I are giving the last issue the same send-off that I gave its inauguration 30 issues ago: an 80-page blowout special. I hope all of you will join us next issue to give VISION the Bon Voyage it deserves.

P.S. Issue #1 and issue #30 will have a famous creator in common. The first person to send in the correct guess before the issue prints will receive a copy of The SILVER SURFER: PARABLE reprint by Stan Lee and Moëbius. Send your entry on a postcard— just the name of the creator, please.

I'm done. TIM TUOHY

MARVEL VISION insights

Dear INSIGHTS,

Your article on the Silver Surfer animated series has a mistake involving the Surfer's first appearance on television. He did appear on the show "Fantastic Four" (ABC, 1967) along with the big guy himself, Galactus. The episode called, "Enter Galactus," featured the Surfer along with the Watcher. Do I get a No-Prize for this correction?

Any chance of the FF going to video? I know that the 1978 show is on video because I have a tape of the FF fighting Magneto. How about the Amazing Spider-Man from the '60s animated show; will that ever make it to video? I hope so.

Gary Griffith
150 Littleton Ave.
Newark, NJ 07107

Thanks for your little note of correction, Gary. We at VISION are always surprised at the memory of our fans. Surely Marvel can boast the most loyal and knowledgeable fanbase in the industry.

Your request for a No-Prize, however, can not be honored because you didn't provide us with a suitable silly reason why the error occurred. That rule was originated by Stan "The Man" himself.

I'm not sure about those old cartoons showing up on video, but you never know what you'll find when scouring the racks.

Dear INSIGHTS,

Well, thank you for the news on the Sleepwalker. I hope someday we will see good old Sleepy again.

First, I am wondering if you know any way I could get some back issues of STRIKEFORCE: MORITURI? I need issue #'s 2, 10, 16, 28, and 30. Please let me know.

Second, I would like to know if this 1980s book will have a return in the 1990s. STRIKEFORCE: MORITURI was a great book. I'd like to see a fresh new book.

Third, I am looking for the bookshelf format of this series as well.

Dennis Holmes
1048 Wish Circle
East Aurora, NY 14052

Sleepwalker and I have always had a strange relationship, even back when I was working as the assistant editor of the book. I always felt that he wasn't being used to his full potential. Julio and I have an idea for him that may or may not see print but keep your eyes peeled.

Dennis, it's funny that you should mention STRIKEFORCE: MORITURI. We are in development at this very moment to bring that book back. The working title for it is STRIKEFORCE: M3.

If you're looking for those back issues, all I can recommend is a search of any comic shops or mail order listings you might run across.

Dear INSIGHTS,

Just trying to get over UNCANNY X-MEN #350. But as much as I try, I can't see Gambit as evil, even though I know his past. Sure he was once the bearer of death, but he changed in the end, finding out that one life can make you look into yourself and think clearly for the first time. Any sad love song can tell you that's true. As for me, one of my greatest reasons for reading X-MEN is gone and in the end, that can never be replaced.

For you guys' sake, though I'll try not to totally give up on the X-Team. Do something.

Hope and hate are certain. The rest, to quote a distant friend, is a gamble.

Becky Lakey
12381 HWY. 29
Lower Lake, CA 95457

I know I'm probably going to get some type of talking to for this but I totally agree with you on this, Becky. I thought that all the build-up to the "Trial of Gambit" nowhere equaled the intended payoff. I felt that after reading it, the X-Men were nothing more than a bunch of self-righteous hypocrites. They've allowed Rogue and Magneto to become X-Men; heck Mags became their leader when Xavier left with Lilandra in issue #200.

Gambit's crime was in the past and his subsequent acts on behalf of the X-Men and mutants in general should have accounted for some type of redemption.

I'm sure that the X-Men will return to their former status as mutantdom's protectors in the near future.

Dear INSIGHTS,

As one of the biggest Iron Man fans on this planet, I totally devoured IRON MAN vol. #3, issue #1. What a great relaunch. We got an iron renaissance here folks, thanks to Mr. Kurt Busiek, Sean Chen, Eric Cannon and co.

I just have one question: On the title page, there's a special thank you to Alex Ross and Allen Bujak for their Iron Man armor design contributions. Well, I know who Alex Ross is, I saw his prototype design for this new Iron Man armor in MARVELS #0, page 26, to be exact. Who exactly is Allen Bujak? Kurt Busiek's secret weapon or something?

My heart felt thanks to everyone who helped bring back our favorite armored avenger.

Mike Kalibabky
5325 McNiven Rd.
Chisholm, MN 55719

Iron Man #1 was a great book, Mike. As for the secret identity of Allen Bujak, well, he's a member of an online fan organization dedicated to Iron Man. Their newsletter features a computer generated Iron Man on the back cover. Well, Kurt liked one of the design elements and asked Allen if he could use said element. Allen of course said, "Yes" and with more contributions from Alex Ross and Sean Chen a new Iron Man was forged.

Dear INSIGHTS,

First of all, Marvel

VISION is da' bomb! (Is this how kids are talking these days? I'm just trying to fit in.)

Okay, on to my question: Is there any kind of Marvel catalog of t-shirts and the like that I could get my hands on? In the early 90s, I went through about a two year period when I didn't buy any comics. This was because of my lack of finances. Recently I have been buying a lot of the back issues and I keep coming across ads for some really cool t-shirts. The one that really caught my eye was the 50 Years of Captain America and Other Heroes t-shirt. I want that shirt!!! Please help me. Can you save the sanity of a life-long Marvelite?

P.M.M. Todd Erickson
1534 N. Timber Ridge
Fridley, MN 55432

You always see pictures for those products in some type of tribute book or a history of book. My advice in obtaining one of those old shirts is to attend a major comic convention and search really hard. I've seen old items like that for sale at the San Diego ComicCon. Good luck.

Dear INSIGHTS,

The last time I wrote this absolutely fantastic magazine, you thanked me for writing in, but you spelled my name wrong. That's okay, I understand. My mother bought me a t-shirt for my birthday that said, "Bad spellers of the world untie." So I understand. Besides, Tim Tuohy is the best editor in comics.

As to why I wrote, I think a few things need to be mentioned. First, Marvel's Silliest Moments is the coolest and most underrated department in VISION. I think it's cool that Marvel and its fans can share a laugh about some of the stuff that has gotten printed over the years. I would also like to mention that the Marvel Chronicles and the Upcoming Marvel Titles section are the first things I read each month. You guys do a better job than PREVIEWS by a long shot.

One suggestion. How about a sidebar box or a window that puts out some real cutting edge tidbits about what might be happening at Marvel? When I borrow a friend's WIZARD I sometimes get a heads up on something going on at Marvel before VISION prints anything about it. I know you like to stick with just the facts, but I don't see how a box meant for rumors could hurt.

Lastly, I followed the debate on the Heroes Reborn with interest and was one of the fans very disappointed by the whole thing. I think the position of those that were not pleased that Marvel turned to Image to update their core characters has been validated. CAPTAIN AMERICA #1, FF #1, IRON MAN #1, and AVENGERS #1 have all been published and they were outstanding. Truly Marvel has once again earned the title House of Ideas. It also proves that Marvel has talent, creativity, and a love for the characters that make them so very special in the first place. I hope that if ever again something new and bold is needed to help out some struggling titles, the powers that be will turn to the best place to find the people to do it, Marvel itself.

I have never been one for fan magazines, or anything of the type, but I would truly miss having VISION to check out each and every month. Great work, guys!! And while you're at it, give New Warriors a chance.

Brain Wolf
1721 Keyway Rd.
Englewood, FL 34223

Thanks for the compliment, Brian. We at VISION are always looking for new ways to present Marvel at its best and many of you out there have commented about a "Rumor Box" in VISION, but I have been against that since VISION's inception. That might be interesting at first, but when some of those "rumors" don't pan out, then how will it look that the voice of Marvel can't get it right?

The Heroes Return books really sent a wave of pride through the hallowed halls of Marvel. They were a much needed shot-in-the-arm after the whole Heroes Reborn displat of a lack of faith by a previous and not missed president.

Dear INSIGHTS,

As I write this, Christmas is only a few days away and the end of 1997 is slowly creeping up on us. And what a year it's been.

THUNDERBOLTS #1 shocked us Marvel fans by revealing the new team of upstart heroes to be none other than Baron Zemo and his Masters of Evil. Iron Fist and Power Man are reunited in HEROES FOR HIRE #1. Marvel introduces their new gatefold covers. Doc Ock returns to the land of the living. The late, great Mark Gruenwald's ashes are mixed into the ink used to print the SQUADRON SUPREME trade paperback-a final request that is moving and a proper tribute to a great man, a fantastic writer and a true fan of the Mighty Marvel Universe. Perhaps even its biggest.

But as great a year as 1997 was, I am sure, nay positive, 1998 will be even greater. I have heard several rumors about what will happen in 1998 and my interest has been piqued.

Thor gets his very first #1 issue. Wolvie may get back his adamantium. The Legacy Virus will finally be cured. Bucky "Rikki" Barnes leaves Heroes Reborn and joins the New Warriors. And I just can't wait for all this to go down.

Before I sign off, I have a few questions;

1) Are there any plans to reprint the 24 issue GODZILLA series of the late 70s as a trade paperback? I'd really like to see one. My individual copies are really looking ragged.

2) Any chance of seeing a new DAMAGE CONTROL or SLAPSTICK series?

3) Any plans to do a 12 issue limited series like SECRET WARS and what DC is doing with the KENTS and JLA YEAR ONE?

Jon Erin Mundy
101 N. Davis
Forest, Ohio 45843

1998 is looking to be a year of great things at Marvel and all of us editors and freelancers are excited about what this new year will bring.

As for your questions:

1) There are no plans for reprinting the Marvel GODZILLA series. Ever since Dark Horse took over the official

Godzilla license with the blessings of Toho Co., they have been the sole producer of comics for the Big G.

2) There are so many new launches planned for 1998 that it's hard to keep track. Keep looking and you might get just what you want.

3) We are not planning at this time any "event-driven" type projects. What we are doing is returning to what made Marvel stand out amongst all of our competitors: "story-driven" works.

If you just look back at what some of DC's event projects have been-- "The Death of Superman," "The Return of Superman," Electric Superman, in May the return of the familiar Superman-- you'll see that all of these are based around an event and not the life of the character. We are trying not to do that and to be true to the stories that these characters have to tell.

Dear INSIGHTS,

Every time I find that a new issue of Marvel VISION is out, I feel a sense of dread. Why? Because this book just gets better and better, and I'll easily spend hours reading it. Issue #27 was no exception. Keep up the great work, and I'll keep making the time.

If things keep going like they are, I think it is safe to say that the title "House of Ideas" is an appropriate accolade once again. Those responsible for the artist/writer pairings of your comics need to be commended. In 1994 I only picked up Spidey titles, in 1995 I added CAPTAIN AMERICA. Now I pick up about three quarters of the hero titles, mainly because they are all great reads.

My only gripe is Heroes Reborn. For me, Heroes Return was none too soon. The only issues I really cared for were the post Liefeld CAPTAIN AMERICA issues. I did buy them all, more out of habit than interest. So far, all of the books are much better now than they were before HRB, so it was worth the year of non-stories.

I also hope one day that Ben Reilly will return. I did not like him as Spider-Man, but I think the earlier incarnation, in which he was agonizing because he was a clone, had potential. Maybe we'll get to see more of him someday? I just hope it doesn't take another 20 years, if ever.

Now for some questions:

1) Is Jocasta still dead? Are there any plans o ever bring her back?

2) How about an interview with my all-time favorite artist, Jim Steranko?

3) It would be great to see a reprint title, perhaps a resurrection of MARVEL TALES, that contains stories from comics that probably will never appear in a trade paperback, but are expensive issues to purchase. Any chance of this?

4) I really like the feature Greatest Comics Never Seen. Has anyone considered printing any of the stories that were completed, perhaps as a WHAT IF...ANNUAL?

Jeff Cox
186 Garrison Rd.
Guntersville, AL 35976

Thank you for the words of praise about VISION, Jeff. I'm afraid that I'm going to have to fill you with dread for a completely different reason. Next month will be the last issue of Marvel VISION. It's true, folks. Low sales have spelled the death knell for VISION. But, that's not for another month so let's answer some questions,

1) Unless I'm mistaken, I think I saw Jocasta lurking around in the Heroes Return Avengers. Look closely because Mr. Pérez really earned his pay for that book.

2) We had planned to run an interview with the ground breaking artist but we had difficulty in reaching him and VISION's cancellation didn't help matters.

3) I am in favor of a reprint title like that but the question would arise, what should we reprint? We are reprinting some materials that have relevance to new launches. Look for SEEKER 3000 PREMIERE which reprints the first and only Seeker 3000 story from way back in MARVEL PREMIERE #41. That reprint will coincide with the launch of the new SEEKER 3000 limited series. If you like the limited, please write in. Julio and I would like it to be an ongoing monthly.

4) There has been some talk about printing all of those Greatest Never Seen stories but because of the various states of completion they are or not in it doesn't seem feasible.

Dear INSIGHTS,

I just wanted to write in and let you guys know what a great job you're doing. I have been reading Marvel comics for 11 years now, collecting most of your titles and I'm just loving it more and more. Next to all the great titles you already have, you're bringing out new ones. New ones. They're new that nobody expected, but turn out to be very entertaining ones.

Take for example, DEADPOOL. From issue #1, I just loved it. Fresh dialogue, fresh art, and so on. We have a year of DEADPOOL behind us now, and all I can say is that it has been a great ride. Especially #11, that one should get a prize. Pure brilliance. Thank Mr. Kelly for me. And I'm not even starting on title like KA-ZAR, THUNDERBOLTS, ALPHA FLIGHT, and QUICKSILVER!

One thing disturbed my thought: The four-part HEROES RETURN. I feel like I was one of the readers who didn't really dislike the Heroes Reborn stuff. although, and I'll be nice, the Captain America stuff wasn't very good. I knew it wouldn't last, so I was waiting for the return. Peter David writing, Salvador Larocca drawing...what could go wrong? The story wasn't what I was expecting. I was hoping for more interaction between both worlds. It was wrapped up too easy. But hey, they're back, so what?

The new FF and CAPTAIN AMERICA look great and the stuff I saw from IRON MAN and AVENGERS should be hot too. They have all got great creative teams. Let's just hope they stay on for a while. Because that's something that has been disturbing me. A new writer or artist gets all the attention and before you know it, he/she's gone.

Salvador Larocca went to EXCALIBUR, but I haven't seen him for some time now. I know he was busy with CRIMSON DAWN

and HEROES RETURN, but still...

Same thing with Ed McGuiness: seven issues later and he leaves DEADPOOL. The fans loved his work, and where's he now? And the list goes on and on. Stable creative teams are very important to comics, and you know it.

But overall, you're doing a great job, especially with VISION. It's good to read about your favorite comics and learn about things you haven't explored yet.

Arjan Terlouw
Merelhoven 1'2902 KA Capelle aan den IJssel
The Netherlands

We'll personally send your best wishes on DEADPOOL over to Mr. Kelly and its ever-suffering editor, "Mirthful" Matt Idelson.

You bring up a disturbing trend with many of today's creators, lack of commitment to a book. It is a serious problem and at times there seems to be no end to it in sight. We should be thankful for artists like Mark Bagley who make a commitment and stick with it. Mark's consistently given us issue after issue of THUNDERBOLTS as well as his lengthy run on AMAZING SPIDER-MAN. Hopefully the days of an artist staying on a book for less than five issues will be behind us soon.

Look for Salva on FANTASTIC FOUR. He'll be there for awhile and Chris Claremont is writing the same book. What a pair!

Dear INSIGHTS,

Care for another letter about Heroes Reunited from a loyal Marvel reader since 1972. It was great or perhaps I should get right to the point and say Victor Von Doom was great. He was a hero; he makes any story great. In my opinion, he and he alone was responsible for saving the alternate universe. It was Doom's genius that made it possible. Sure all the heroes united to help stop Galactus, just like they stopped Onslaught, something the mutants were not able to do. I think every true Marvelite knows deep down in his/her heart that Onslaught could not hold a candle to the power of Galactus. Just as Magneto couldn't hold a match to the power of Dr. Doom. To prove this point, just read the very last issue of the short lived Marvel series, SUPER VILLAIN TEAM-UP, where Magneto bows in submission before Doom and asks Doom why he just doesn't end his life instead of just humiliating him. The great Dr. Doom says he will give him a chance and only with the help of the Beast and the original Ghost Rider, and The Champions does he manage to stop Doom. Till this day I still believe it was only a robot Doom.

As you can tell, I am a big fan of Dr. Doom and do not really care for the mutant comics. I am not a racist by no means, for if mutants like the X-Men existed in real life, I would befriend them all, then I would slay them all, just like Von Doom would. People reading this may not agree or like my point of view, but too bad. This is America. I wonder how many of them have read the Marvel Graphic novel by David Michelinie and Bob Hall called "Emperor Doom"? In it, Doom takes over the world. During his reign, war, famine, political injustice, racism and violent crimes all become a thing of the past. But the good Captain America says peace should be a people's choice, not some dictator's mandate. Yeah, right, Cap! Look at the choices that we the people of America and the world have, the choice of violence in the streets, racism, people starving al over the world, terrorism, genocide, need I go on? Way back in FF #116, Dr. Doom unselfishly helps save the world from Over-Mind. Doom is not some form of a Marvel anti-Christ; he's a misunderstood villain, a victim of circumstances. Maybe I should start a Dr. Doom fan club. I'm sure thousands would join.

Heroes Reunited, Heroes Reborn, and Heroes Return were all great stories. In my view, they were much better than most of the Onslaught storyline.

Greg Famis
5553 Lewis #19
Toledo, Ohio 43612

Okay. I heard that electricity usage around Greg's house tripled in a short period of time. Better watch out for those world domination machines in his backyard.

Just kidding, Greg. Doom has always been one of my favorite characters, I guess it has to do with the FF being my all-time favorite book. Someday Doom will come fully into his own. I'm just glad it'll be in a comic.

THANKS FOR WRITING!

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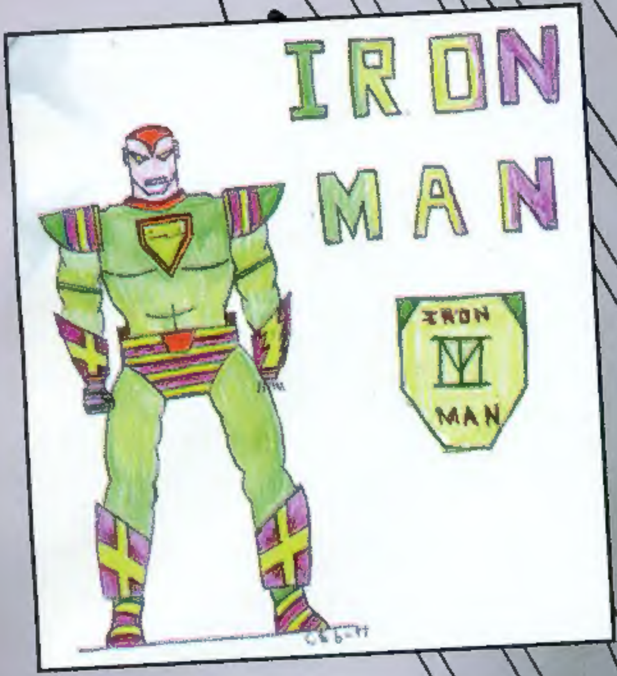
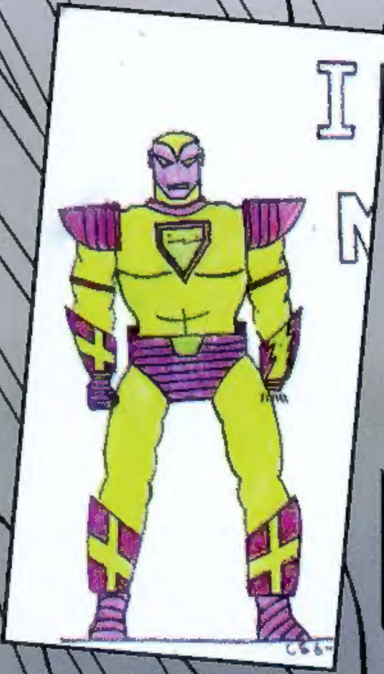
NEXT MONTH: THE LAST VISION LETTERS PAGE!

VISION FAN ART





JUGGLING with JURGENS

Dan Jurgens is one very busy comic creator! In addition to writing DC's SUPERMAN and TEEN TITANS (which he also pencils by the way), in May he brings his act to Marvel for two projects - the relaunch of the ongoing THOR series and a 3-issue IRON FIST limited series. VISION recently dragged Jurgens away from his desk just long enough to ask him about his crowded schedule, making Iron Fist and the Thunder God cool for the '90s, and having fun making comic books....

MV: You see to be juggling about a half-dozen projects in the air at the moment. How do you stay fresh writing so many titles each month and how do you keep it fun for yourself?

DJ: Part of what keeps it all fun is to take on a variety of projects. I've often said that if I could only do one book a month - and no more work - I'd leave the industry just because I'd get bored. When I do something like DC's TANGENT Comics for example (which Jurgens conceived, wrote for, penciled, and served as creative consultant on), that keeps me fresh, more excited about work in general, and hopefully that shows up on other projects as well - including ones I have been doing for umpteen years like SUPERMAN. So when I take on projects like THOR and IRON FIST, it's working with new people, working with new characters, and thinking in new directions, that really does have a return benefit on the other stuff as well.

MV: This will be your first mainstream Marvel work since your brief run on SENSATIONAL SPIDER-MAN a few years back. Is the Marvel Universe someplace you have been itching to get back into since then?

DJ: Oh, I've always wanted to get into the MU, even before Spider-Man. I've done so much at DC, and accomplished so much there of what I wanted to do creatively, that Marvel always represented this whole great big universe where I wanted to go to try and accomplish some creative stuff as well. Spider-Man was a start but that ended rather abruptly. So yeah, this is sort of getting back into it...

MV: So what parts of the MU most interest you?

DJ: I'm more of a traditionalist in terms of the Marvel characters. It's always been the core Avengers-type of characters, along with the FF, Spidey, Daredevil and company that has interested me. And even some of the '70s type stuff, which is where IRON FIST comes in, and Shang-Chi, and Howard the Duck, and the rest.

MV: Now you and John Romita Jr. have the responsibility of creating the first-ever #1 issue of THOR...

DJ: Isn't that amazing that he's never had a #1?

MV: It is...how'd you get the gig?

DJ: THOR editor Tom Brevoort gave me a call out of the blue recently, and asked me if I would be interested in Thor. I said, "It's funny you should ask." Marvel had actually offered me THOR about four years ago. I didn't do it at the time but it had gotten me thinking about the character.

MV: Thor wasn't given his own HEROES REBORN title, and now the relaunch of his solo series is coming a good 5 or 6 months after the other HEROES RETURN titles. Is there a particular reason for this? Is Thor a more difficult character to write, or for today's audiences to relate to?

DJ: I think it's harder for audiences to relate to him. I certainly know there are people who think that Thor's time has sort of come and gone, that part of the uniqueness of Thor was his appearance in the 1960s. When Thor first showed up, even the idea of a guy walking around with long blond hair that could be tied into a ponytail was really rather different. These days you turn on TV or walk down the street, you see it all the time. I mean for godsakes, even Clark Kent went the ponytail route (laughs) - and because of that, Thor no longer seems quite as exceptional. Thor seemed newer and fresher then because in terms of the comic marketplace, this thought of "gods" and this grandiose scope that they painted with Asgard - all of that was very fresh. Well, now virtually any time you pick up a super hero comic in any given week, chances are the hero is fighting someone who says (in deep voice) "I am a god." So the currency has been devalued somewhat in a creative sense, but at the same time, there are very viable entertaining stories that can be told with Thor because he is still so darn unique.

MV: Is the challenge then to make him unique for the '90s, or is going

back to what used to make him unique what you are aiming for?

DJ: It's a blend - I think in the case of something like Thor, as in so many characters, very often the best you can do is to go back to the original models, find out what made them work, and use that for the basis of what you're doing right now. Certainly, that's a lot of what is happening with the Heroes Return stuff in general. As a writer, you ask yourself, "In his simplest form, who is this character? If I explained him in two sentences, how would I do that?" You start with that as your first building block and try to write up from there.

MV: So who is Thor in his simplest form?

DJ: Thor is a very complex character - he's a god who is very attracted to this mortal plane of ours. He's also something of a loner. I want to alienate him somewhat from the world. When playing with the concept of a super hero universe, I don't care if the civilian populace is used to having superhuman characters that fly overhead and everything. Even given that set of circumstances, if someone stands next to you and says "I am a god," it's a formidable statement, and I'll play with that a little bit. For example, in the context of the Avengers, Captain America is probably very comfortable around Thor - maybe Iron Man. But I don't think Hawkeye should be. After all, this is the guy who says he's the son of Odin; he has a day of the week named after him. So I'll play that up, while at the same time, play up any human guise he might have while he's here on Earth.

MV: How about a human guise...will Thor have an alter ego/secret identity? Any chance of a certain doctor making a return?

DJ: Yes he will, and no he won't. I think the best model of Thor was the very first one - where it was the Dr. Donald Blake sort of persona. I want to get back to that model somewhat, without actually using Donald Blake again.

MV: So no Donald Blake; can you tell us who his alter ego will be?

DJ: Not yet - I want some of those surprises to play out in the series itself. But again it's the "Donald Blake model"; that's what I want to use as sort of the framework of where we are going. Thor needs that balance of mortal life to help keep him on Earth and give his stories a little more relevance to today's readers.

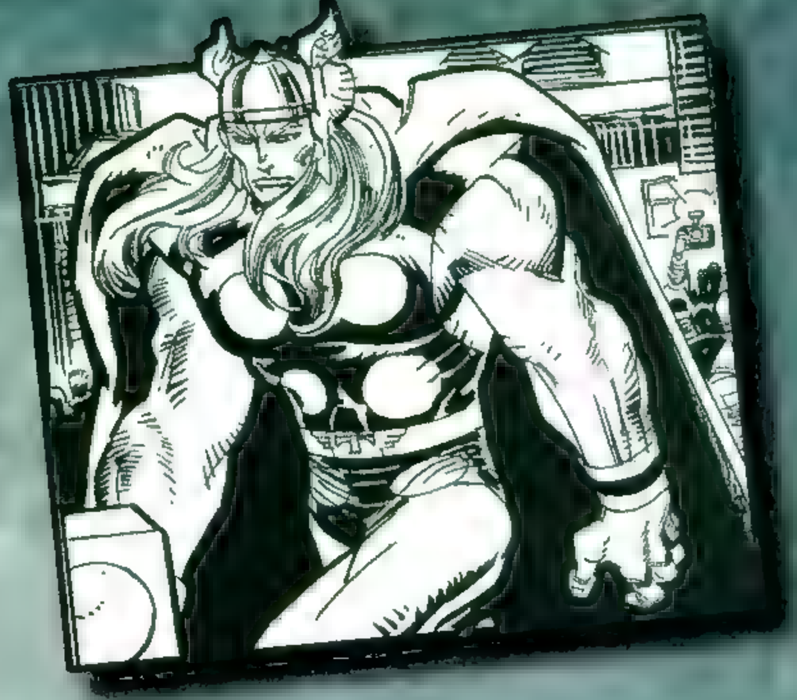
MV: Kurt Busiek and George Pérez got first crack at reintroducing the post-Reborn Thor in the pages of the AVENGERS. Will you and JR. Jr coordinate with them, assuming Thor will be hanging around with the Avengers?

DJ: Yes...part of the thing that works out well there is that Tom Brevoort is also editor of the Avengers. Kurt and I have discussed how he sees the character and how I see the character. Fortunately we are in fairly high accord there, so I don't foresee any problems at all. But at the same time, when Kurt and George reintroduce Thor, he's got that beard, and both JR. Jr and I have asked that the beard be gone (laughing)...by the time we get the book. We want the clean-shaven Thor, so we are coordinating.

MV: Where do you stand on "Thor-speak"? Last we saw Thor in the MU, he was speaking in colloquial English, and his Heroes Reborn speech patterns were all over the place.

DJ: My Thor is going to be the Stan Lee Thor, which is much more - what do we call it - the "Shakespearean" version. Again, that's what separates Thor from the people around him. It's part of him - it's also more fun, more interesting, and makes him unique.

MV: So are you referencing your English-to-Asgardian dictionary yet? How much of a challenge is that for you as a writer?



DJ: I've been working on that - I really have. I've just tried to get acclimated to that school of thought because it's very different, and it's going to be harder than I anticipated. When you don't do it well, it shows up on the smaller stuff. It's not "For honor, for Asgard, for glory" - that's easy. It's in the more mundane conversation that it has to really shine.

MV: Will you be addressing dangling plotlines from the pre-Reborn run? And what's the status of Asgard?

DJ: There's some stuff actually dangling from the Heroes Return limited series that has to be straightened out, and there's been allusion to the idea that Thor is missing some time in his life somehow, so there's some backstory there. As for Asgard, it was destroyed in an issue of JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY last year, and as I pick it up, Asgard once again is destroyed, and nobody knows where Odin and company are - the gods are gone.

MV: Then you are picking up on JIM's "Lost Gods" storyline?

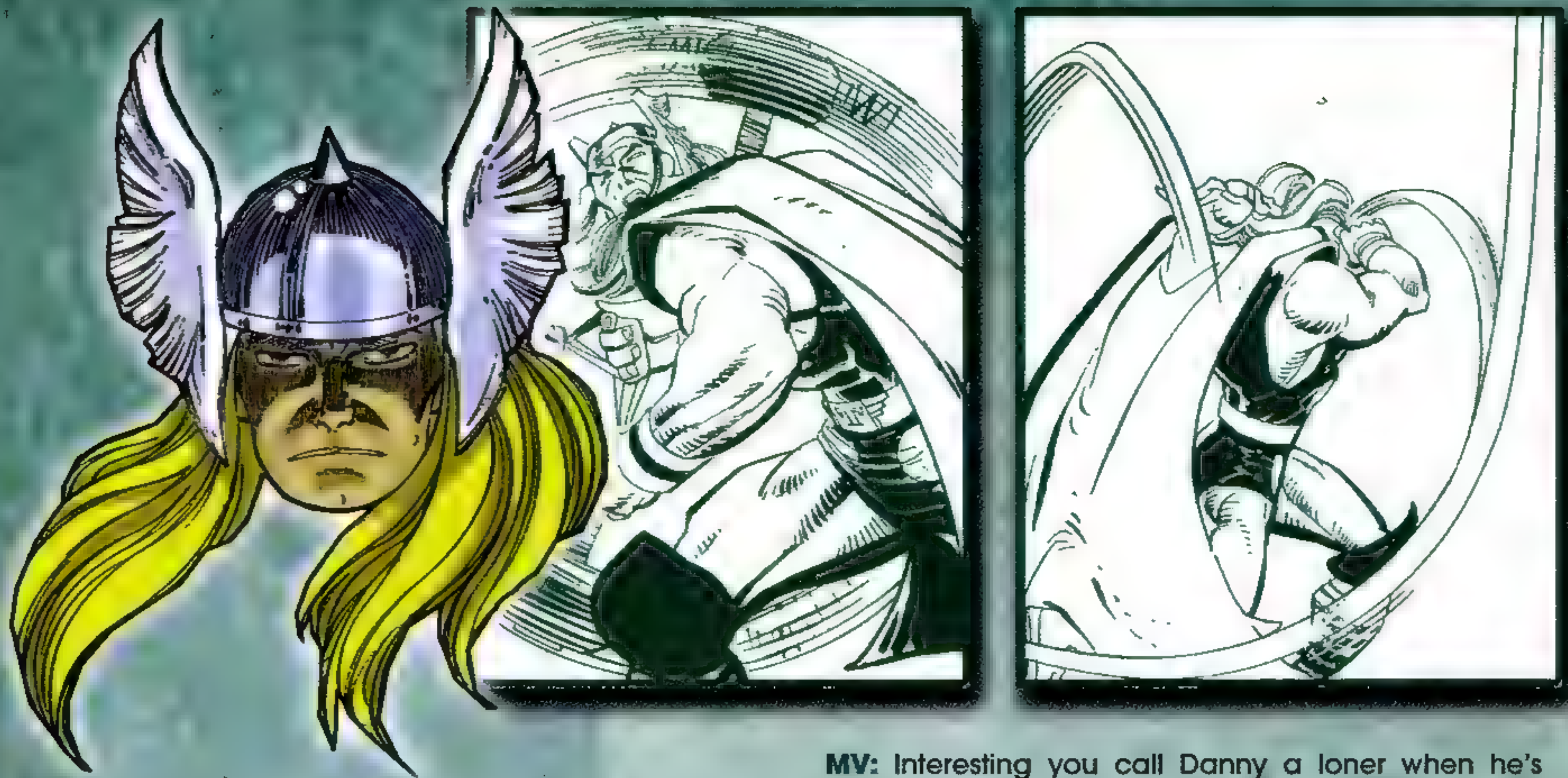
DJ: Yes. For me it works out well because it gives me the chance to concentrate on Thor and slowly reintroduce some of the Asgardian stuff - which I think is going to work out fairly well.

MV: So Thor will obviously be spending more time on Earth than Asgard. Can you tell us about his supporting cast? Are you introducing new characters, bringing back old ones?

DJ: Primarily new ones - although we will see a very familiar old one. Jane Foster shows up in the first issue, as well as a lot of new supporting cast members we've never seen before, as we try and carve out a new life for Thor. But at the same time, we'll introduce some Asgardian elements as well. If you look at the history of Thor, there are times when he's gone completely "Asgardian," and the notion of him being a god becomes slightly devalued because we lose that comparison of mortal man around him. There are other times when he's gone the complete "adventure on Earth" route, which tends to make him just like any other super hero. The difficulty is finding the right balance and mix, where you get a little bit of both all the time.

MV: How about a love interest? You mentioned Jane Foster making an appearance; any new romantic interests in Thor's future? Does Sif figure in any of this?

DJ: I think love triangles are absolutely great. The fun here is reintroducing Jane Foster, as well as a new love interest for Thor's mortal alter ego, and adding Sif to the mix someplace, so we can make it as complicated and full of soap opera elements as possible. Because that's what keeps people coming back every month, much more so than the "fight of the month."



MV: On that note, what villains will you be using?

DJ: We're going to kick things off with the Destroyer, who I think is a great Marvel-type character. After that, it's going to be new villains for most of the first year. Thor's greatest villain is obviously Loki, but we've seen a lot of Loki bouncing around the Reborn titles the past year. So I want to take it easy and save him for something big, and at the same time, introduce some new elements to keep this thing fresh. I want a balance here of old vs. new.

MV: Who make good adversaries for Thor? Earthbound foes? Cosmic-type villains?

DJ: By virtue and nature of the character, it tends to be "cosmic" characters. The fact is, and this has always been a problem with Superman, that in so many of our stories, the fight should really be over on page 2, and Superman should go walk in the park or something for the next 20 pages. For "earthbound" villains, if Thor is as powerful as we say, that story should be over by page 2. So Thor is a character that has to go cosmic.

MV: Speaking of Superman, since you now write both, who'd win in a steel-cage grudge match, Thor or Superman (keeping in mind that this is a Marvel publication)?

DJ: (both laughing) That's tough. If it boiled down to moral character, backbone, and stuff. I'd say it would probably be Superman. But if the fight was written realistically, it would be Thor, just because of the magic component that would be a weakness for Superman.

MV: May is a big month for you at Marvel. In addition to THOR, the first issue of your IRON FIST limited series debuts. What can you tell us about this one?

DJ: Like Thor, I see Iron First as something of a loner. I've always preferred Danny Rand by himself rather than in a group context, using his ninja abilities to kind of sneak around in the shadows and leap across rooftops and all of that. And in the '70s he always had this cool style of writing that Chris Claremont gave him - "You are Daniel Rand, you see the light of the moon casting shadows across the rooftops of New York City - yet you know the threat is near..." - something like that. That isolated the character, and was tremendously effective. That's what we're going to do with the limited series. Get him alone, on his own footing, and have him do more than just turn his hand into a chunk of iron and go whack somebody. We'll be introducing some new characters, reintroducing the Scorpio Key and Scorpio character that people remember from the S.H.I.E.L.D. stuff, and just have fun with Iron Fist.

MV: Interesting you call Danny a loner when he's portrayed very often in team settings, like the two incarnations of HEROES FOR HIRE. Is this something you will address?

DJ: To a certain degree. In the first few pages of issue #1 we'll say something to the effect that for a guy who pretty much was alone most of his life, he finds himself surrounded with a lot of people right now, and he thinks, "Gee it's good to get out and be alone again." That's very much the story for all of us in some respect. We spend a lot of time with people in the workplace and yeah, it feels good to go home, kick back and relax. It will sort of be about that as well. I'm not saying that Danny shouldn't be in HEROES FOR HIRE, I just find him more effective alone.

MV: Can a '70s character like Iron Fist find an audience in the '90s?

DJ: The thing is, Iron First was always considered the "Kung-Fu" character and the "Kung-Fu" book. That's somewhat indicative of the '70s and dated in some respects. What you can do is take what's good about that character and translate it into the '90s as a character who gets embroiled in lots of cool, big adventures - without necessarily saying it's a "Kung-Fu" comic. It's an adventure comic. It's a story about action, about a guy who can walk into a room, find 30 guys and whip their butts - not by firing "force bolts" at them - but by cool, choreographed action, which I think is fun.

MV: You seem to be having a lot of fun lately...

DJ: Yeah, part of what's going to be fun about both these projects is working with people that are exciting to work with - that's so much of the creative experience. Jackson Guice is drawing the IRON FIST limited series; he and I worked as colleagues on the Superman books and we've wanted to work together again for a long time. And I think JR. Jr is fabulous; I've always liked his work immensely. He's an artist that other artists admire, and one of the magnets that attracted me to Thor.

MV: His style seems particularly suited for Thor... he's got that sense of grandiose scope you mentioned earlier.

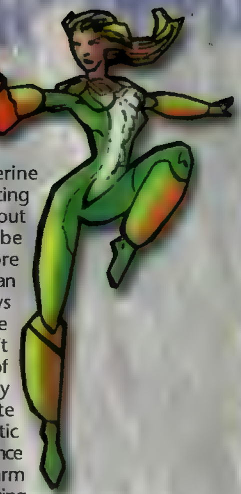
DJ: Absolutely. I remember reading in WIZARD - long before I became part of Thor - that John would be penciling it, and I thought "Oh wow! This is great! I'm going to buy that book and I don't care who writes it." Little did I know...

(laughs) - go figure.

ADVENTURES IN THE GREAT WHITE NORTH

Alpha Flight and the X-Men have had a shaky relationship from the get-go. Ever since Wolverine walked out on his fellow Canucks, a blend of animosity and resentment has clouded their minds. On numerous occasions, the two teams have clashed and come to blows about Wolverine's actions. Definitely not the best of friends. Now the X-Men (consisting of Colossus, Cyclops, Kitty, Nightcrawler, Storm and Wolverine) have been captured by a madman using technology provided by Canada's Department H. When Xavier learns of his students' predicament, he must reluctantly turn to the original Guardian for explanations...and an ally. But will they be able to overcome their differences, put the past behind them and save the X-Men? The answers lie in March's two-part limited series X-MEN/ALPHA FLIGHT, an untold tale of their past by writer Ben (EXCALIBUR) Raab and co-writer/penciler/inker John (DESPERADOES) Cassaday.

"We wanted to do the characters the way we remembered them," explains Raab about the reasoning behind the dream project. "There was a time period in which we wanted to see certain characters meet up and fight side by side instead of against each other. And we couldn't do that in the present. We've seen them go up against each other but it wasn't until X-MEN/ALPHA FLIGHT LIMITED SERIES they sort of teamed up. This is



purely our two favorite super teams banding together for the first time."

The story's time frame is around ALPHA FLIGHT #5 when Marrina has just left her teammates (Guardian, Sasquatch, Puck, Shaman, Snowbird, Aurora and Northstar) behind after facing the Master. Orchestrating the strike against our heroes is Baron Strucker, a villain who once encountered Professor Charles Xavier. Wayyyy back when Xavier first met up with Magneto (as told in UNCANNY X-MEN #161), the two thwarted Hydra Leader Strucker's quest to retrieve his Nazi gold. Basically seeking revenge, he's now back to prove he's superior to mutants by kidnapping the people most dear to Xavier, the X-Men. While fans may consider Strucker as a cliché, third rate, loser character, the two writers hope to change all that with a twist.

In his lair, Strucker is in a total disarray with alcohol bottles everywhere, a morphine needle in one hand and he's gotten fat. Yet he still wears his Hydra uniform and a Nazi jacket in an attempt to capture some old glory. Raab describes him as a man who has "gone over the edge. Gone are the days of Hail Hydra! Now it's a very subtle, silent but eternally, maniacally evil 'I know I'm right, and I'm going to prove it.'"

But as Magneto will tell you, vanquishing these mutant heroes is no easy task, so what is Strucker's secret weapon? He simply cuts a deal with Canada's Department H, specifically with one of the head honchos, Gary Cody. Cody knows he shouldn't but he sells prototype battlesuits, designed by James (Guardian) Hudson, to Strucker in hopes the cash will help financially jump-start Alpha Flight's and Beta Flight's programs. Cassaday points out they didn't want to do the typical "two teams accidentally bumping into each other" and go from there. Instead, Strucker has provided a solid, valid link between them.

The first issue finds the X-team ambushed while they are enjoying some well deserved R and R. Kitty and Colossus are on their first unchaperoned date and Nightcrawler is enjoying an Errol Flynn movie marathon when they are attacked by a battlesuit-sporting goon squad. With her ability to disrupt electrical systems, Kitty poses the greatest threat and is immediately taken out. Nightcrawler sends out a desperate telepathic distress call to Xavier to bring in the big guns but even with the rest of the team, they are surrounded and ultimately overwhelmed.

At that point, Xavier contacts Guardian which is a very difficult thing for him to do. There is no love lost here and they know it. "For the first time, Guardian and Xavier are going to meet since they never met in any of the older books," says Cassaday. "There's a lot of mixed feelings going on between the two. Guardian resents Xavier for having taken Wolverine away from him. Xavier resents Guardian because he didn't quite keep his end of the bargain when it came to Wolverine. He treated him kind of poorly. There's this tension running between the two that's going to be one of the cooler scenes."

Xavier assumes Department H is responsible for all the mayhem until Guardian brings up Hydra. Taken aback, Xavier makes the connection and knows it's Strucker. Now he needs some help to save his students and turns to Alpha Flight. In the end though, there was never truly any doubt. They need each other and Guardian wants to make things right.

"Issue #1 ends with Guardian walking down the X-Mansion's hall thinking about what he's about to ask Alpha Flight to do," informs Raab. "He's not a 100% sure of his team right now. Yeah, they've had a couple of little victories but they've also lost Marrina. But the last page has him on the phone calling his wife Heather and saying send the signal."

Sound the trumpets, the cavalry is coming. Narrowing down Hydra's headquarters to a certain base in the South Pacific, issue #2 focuses on Alpha Flight rescuing the X-Men and eventually pairing together against a common foe for the first time. While there will be plenty of action as the good guys mop up their adversaries, Cassaday says part of the joy of this limited series is watching the characterization, something his co-writer agrees with.

"From a character standpoint, a lot of them have similar feelings," says Raab. "If you look at guys like Sasquatch and Nightcrawler, they share certain insecurities about their effectiveness to the team. For Sasquatch, he's always trying to keep the beast within him. If he gives in to it, then what's going to happen? How is he going to be of use to the team? For Nightcrawler, he's really not a heavy hitter, he's a little jokester, a little swashbuckling guy. What does he contribute to the team? You really get to see certain parallels here."

Other highlights include a scene at the beginning where Scott and Logan are sharing a tender moment while visiting Jean Grey's grave. Another has Wolverine and Guardian interacting with each other without realizing it will be the last time before Guardian's death. Shaman actually foreshadows his teammate's demise in a vision but doesn't know what to make of it. And what story would be complete without a little romantic flirting? Nightcrawler once again turns up the charm levels with Aurora, causing the rage within Sasquatch to stir.

So whether it's for all-out action, character interaction, art attraction or fan reaction, the bottom line is these are two of the coolest teams ever that go great together. X-MEN/ALPHA FLIGHT. Forget about March break, something better's coming your way.

—Bryan Cairns

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Weather
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DAILY BUGLE®

IN THIS ISSUE
Hanging out with the local swinger. A day in the life of Spider-Man
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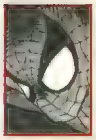


March 10, 1998 — New York's Finest Daily Newspaper — Fifty Cents

S.H.I.E.L.D. AGENT SOUGHT

Agent faces a possible indictment on charges of espionage

Julia Sodo -UPI

A longstanding agent of S.H.I.E.L.D., the Strategic Hazard Intervention Espionage Logistics Directorate, is being sought for questioning and faces a possible indictment on charges of espionage.

Sharon Carter, whose service to S.H.I.E.L.D. dates back to the organization's infancy, is accused of hacking into classified computer files, breaking into and entering a top-secret research installation, and trespassing upon the grounds of the original S.H.I.E.L.D. headquarters which was destroyed by Hydra several months ago.

S.H.I.E.L.D. has dominated the headlines as of late, rescuing New York from its recent jungle infestation, combating Onslaught, and bringing an end to the illegal Zero Tolerance operation in which rogue members of the government recently participated. But S.H.I.E.L.D.'s biggest headlines of late were for the death and subsequent funeral of Nick Fury, the World War II hero who went on to become S.H.I.E.L.D.'s famous longtime director.

It was shortly after S.H.I.E.L.D. was created that Sharon Carter went to work for the organization. As is standard security policy with S.H.I.E.L.D., little information was released on the agent. What is known is that she was believed to have died while on an undercover mission several years ago. She recently contradicted the premature reports of her death by returning to the United States alongside Captain America shortly before the Onslaught incident, at which time she was given a limited reinstatement with S.H.I.E.L.D.

It is believed that since returning to the security organization, Carter has used her skills and training to cull unrevealed information from S.H.I.E.L.D.'s central database. While confirmation was impossible to attain, it is rumored that Carter accessed data on a top-secret cryonics installation located in Washington, D.C. and that she later broke into the facility. S.H.I.E.L.D. spokesperson Gabe Jones refused to comment on the matter, saying only that "we have a rogue agent and we're dealing with said agent. The nation's security is at no risk whatsoever." In contrast, the rumors on Capitol Hill are that no one is really sure what Agent Carter is looking for.

Neither government officials nor S.H.I.E.L.D.'s inner circle would confirm or deny the situation, but several low-ranking field agents spoke on condition of anonymity. They claimed that there has been distrust and sometimes open friction between Carter and her superiors, and that they could see her apparent betrayal as long in the making. Said one agent, "From day one she's had a chip on her shoulder. I think she blames S.H.I.E.L.D. for leaving her for dead during her last mission." The real question however may not be her motivation, but whom she is working for now.

—Continued in FURY/AGENT 13 #1

"ANGEL" TRIAL OFF TO A ROCKY START

Ben Urich -BUGLE STAFF

The trial of Karen Page, a.k.a. radio personality Paige Angel, got off to a disruptive and violent beginning when the body of an unidentified woman came crashing through an overhead skylight.

The "Angel" Trial, as it has become dubbed in the media, centers on Karen Page. Page, who believed she had been stalked by an obsessed fan, allegedly lost control of her fear and murdered Officer Charles Boroughs who was assigned to protect her.

On the opening day of the trial, famed defense attorney Matt Murdock attempted to paint a picture of Boroughs as less than a reputable Officer of the law. Boroughs, Murdock claimed, was mentally unstable, and was actually the stalker Page was to be protected from. That tactic came under fire from the prosecution, which accused the defense of putting the victim on trial.

The prosecution is widely considered to have an airtight case against Page. Most of the forensic evidence including the gun and bullet point to Page as the murderer.

But the trial took an even more bizarre turn just as Murdock was explaining his charges against Officer Boroughs. The body of a woman was thrown through the skylight of the courtroom and fell to the floor. Covered in graffiti, it was immediately apparent to the jury that this woman had fallen victim to the same stalker that has hounded Karen Page. The trial was immediately thrown into recess.

It is unclear how this will affect the Defense's case. There has been a heated debate in the legal community about whether this latest development should even be entered into the case or if a new jury will have to be selected.

—Continued in DAREDEVIL #375

IS THE WORLD READY FOR THE HORNET?

Phil Bostwich-BUGLE

The citizens of New York have seen all manner of heroes and villains alike over the years, and it's safe to say that Manhattanites have grown a bit jaded during that time. So it was something of a surprise when a new hero burst on the scene to widespread excitement and approval.

He calls himself the Hornet, and he stopped a two-bit thief named the Looter this afternoon in Midtown. When it was over, he found himself facing a throng of well-wishers and newfound fans. In a brief statement, the Hornet announced that he was a force for good, and that he was on our side.

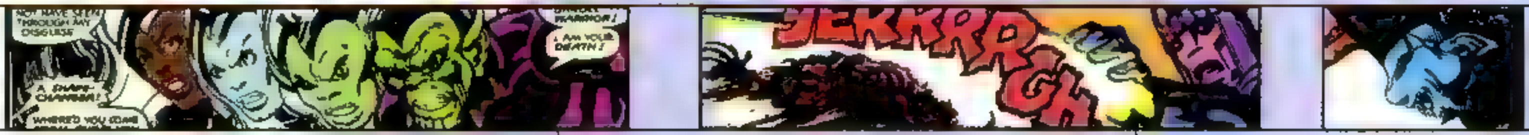
Even our esteemed publisher, Norman Osborn was moved to proclaim, "We need more heroes like you in this town."

—Continued in SENSATIONAL SPIDER-MAN #27

Staff Photo Chuck Giambalvo

He's the Best there is at What He Does... A Conversation with

Chris Claremont



You can almost say that Chris Claremont has come full circle. He started out as a freelance writer and staff member at Marvel back in the seventies. He continued writing and eventually revolutionized the industry by spinning yarns about a group of mutants known as the X-Men. Maybe you've heard of them. Chris stayed with his "X" family into the better part of this decade. He then stopped freelancing for Marvel and pursued other projects.

Now this is where the full circle part comes into play. Chris Claremont is back again in a staff position at Marvel! He chatted with Vision writer Dean Davis about his new job plus a couple of his old ones. And now, the man who made the words "SNIKT" and "BAMF" part of the English language...

DEAN: Okay, let's start off by learning about your new title and duties.
CHRIS: The formal title is Vice-President/Editorial Director. In the overall scheme of things my responsibilities to the writing side of the house are analogous to Michael Golden's position as Senior Art Director to the artistic side. I work with the editors, and through them the writers, on Marvel's books. The goal is to take what's good and make it better...to try to energize and excite the line to its fullest potential. Our goal is to make the books more accessible to the general marketplace. We want to attract the most readers to our titles that we can get.

DEAN: Was this position previously held by someone else or was it newly created and you were the guy they had in mind?
CHRIS: I don't believe there was a position like this before. All things being equal...the position calls for someone with the right blend of qualifications: longevity, experience, stature. Hopefully I can bring to it the best of my talents and skills. For now this job is in a process of evolution. We have a basic idea but we're really defining it as we go along.

DEAN: You say you're in a unique situation. What's something that allows you to see it as unique?
CHRIS: From my previous experience with this company I bring a fairly comprehensive familiarity of the Marvel Universe. Combine that with the fact that the last seven-odd years I haven't really read much of the Marvel Universe. I'm not that familiar with the current continuity. So, when I pick up a comic I'm looking at it like a new reader would. I feel the questions I ask about these characters would be the same ones that a person reading a Marvel comic for the first time would ask.

DEAN: By facing the challenges that lie ahead for you, what is it you want to try and accomplish first?
CHRIS: At least for the foreseeable future, I want to see every finished book that we put out. I want to know where the books are going partly to coordinate the characters and stories. For example, we could have a situation where a proposed series involving Sabretooth is coming out at the same time some major moves are being made on him in the X-Men books. That's just overkill. We need a central clearing-house to make sure we're not falling over each other or stepping on someone's toes when it comes to the continuity of a character. These are good characters and we want to show them in their best light both commercially and creatively.

DEAN: So Punisher, Wolverine, and Venom won't be popping up almost anywhere and everywhere like they have in the past?
CHRIS: They shouldn't be, no.

DEAN: Does this mean that you edit books directly?
CHRIS: Not really...that's the current editor's or line editor's responsibility on each of those titles. Ralph Macchio is the line editor for the Spider-Man books. He will determine the direction of the series. Bob Harras is the editor-in-chief; the final authority for everything is his. I'm sort of sitting at Bob's left hand.

I insert myself in the process if: a) an editor requests me to take a look at something they're not sure about, or b) if there is a series that is not working to its potential. Then it's a matter of sitting down with the editor and resolving questions that I might have about the series. There's nothing that's selling so well that it can't stand a second look in terms of our getting it right.

DEAN: If I'm not mistaken, you were once an editor yourself?
CHRIS: Yes, twenty-two years ago I was the associate editor of Marvel. I worked with Len Wein, then Marv Wolfman. Back then we only had six people to do what has now grown into something like twenty or thirty. (both laugh)

DEAN: Then this new job can't follow a set formula or pattern?
CHRIS: Not really. How Bob and I both work with each situation changes from editor to editor. It's a matter of synergy and circumstance. Some books perhaps might benefit from direct hands-on intervention and some might not. You have to approach it on a case-by-case basis.

The same goes for writers. The way Stan Lee wrote the Fantastic Four was different than the way Roy Thomas handled it. The way Scott Lobdell wrote the book is different than the way I'm approaching it.

DEAN: That's right, you've been writing the FF since issue #4. Is there anything else you're writing?
CHRIS: I'll be doing an arc or longer in Wolverine starting in issue #125. It's sort of a kickoff to the X-Men 35th Anniversary Summer.

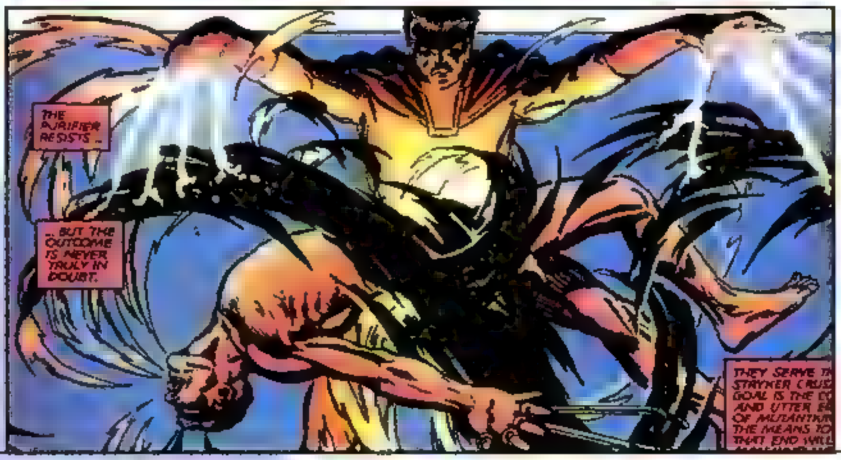
DEAN: As Editorial Director will you possibly suggest any revamps on some of Marvel's characters?
CHRIS: Quite frankly it's happening right now. You have to understand, we're asking our readers to pay an average of two bucks for each issue. We're also asking them to take twenty minutes or so of their lives to read that issue. We want to provide the Marvel fan with quality products for that time and money. We also want them to return next month.

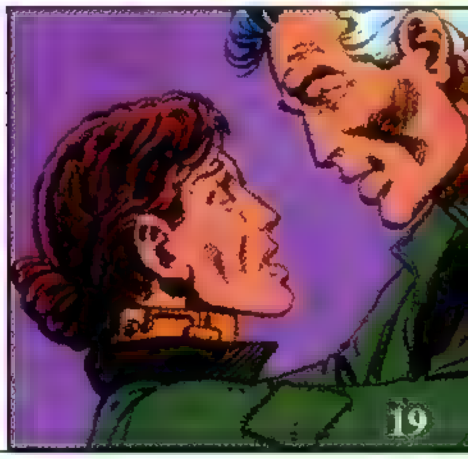
We're in the business of entertaining. Our form of entertainment doesn't cost $200 million to produce like a few of today's movies, but we do have the same results in mind and that's to put people in the seats, metaphorically speaking. I don't want to sell to 30,000 people with each title—I want to sell to 300,000-plus readers every month. I don't want to sell to speculators per se—I want to sell to readers. I want people to enjoy these stories and tell their friends. These books are being printed to be read and enjoyed.

I want to generate the kind of passion, delight, and excitement that I felt when I started reading comics. Marvel has a string of tremendously interesting and neat characters. That's primarily because from the beginning Stan Lee made the correct decision that these are stories about people. Spider-Man is about the life of Peter Parker and how that life is affected when he puts on this costume, in fulfillment of the dictum, "With great power there must also come great responsibility."

The X-Men aren't a band of superpowered mutants. They're a group of people who possess these incredible powers but who have as a consequence made the decision to band together for a common cause. We must never lose sight of the fact that they are human beings who have dreams and aspirations just as we do. They're not simply super heroes who sometimes slum around with secret identities—which is how it's occasionally portrayed at other companies.

DEAN: Let's talk about the X-Men a bit. How did you land the gig on that title?
CHRIS: I was working with Len at





the time as his associate editor. He and Dave Cockrum were working on Giant-Size X-Men #1 and I would sit in on the plot sessions. Eventually, Len's responsibilities took him elsewhere in the company and I was asked to write the book. It was fun. I really love Dave's work.

When I started on X-Men it was only a giant-size quarterly, so it wasn't a huge seller. This was the relaunch of a mid-list title that had never really been successful previously. Little did we realize what was lurking in the wings. I liked the thought of doing four big issues a year.

A week after I signed on, Marvel reconfigured their line and dropped most of the giant-size books; suddenly Giant-Size #2 became X-Men #94 and #95. We were thrown immediately into the standard deadline mix and also had to face the reality that in six issues we had #100. So instead of getting started with some cool stories, Dave and I had to do something that would gradually build up to something huge and exciting for the milestone issue. That was a little difficult because when you start a new book you generally take six or so issues to get comfortable with the characters and their world.

Much to everyone's surprise the book struck a very resonant chord in the readership. We probably could have gone monthly within the first year except that Dave would have never survived with the schedule. We stayed bimonthly with the title. When John Byrne came on as the artist we went monthly. I wrote the characters for seventeen years. I knew them longer than I knew most of my friends at that time.

DEAN: You don't see many writers or artists staying on a book that long.
CHRIS: True, and that's a frustration that many editors face. There are writers and artists today that stay with a title for about five issues and by the time they are familiar with the characters and the continuity, they're gone. There's no rhythm to the storyline, you're constantly having to rebuild and retool. Each creative team brings to a series their own approach. When teams or individuals constantly switch books it sometimes gives the reader a bumpy ride and it shouldn't be like that.

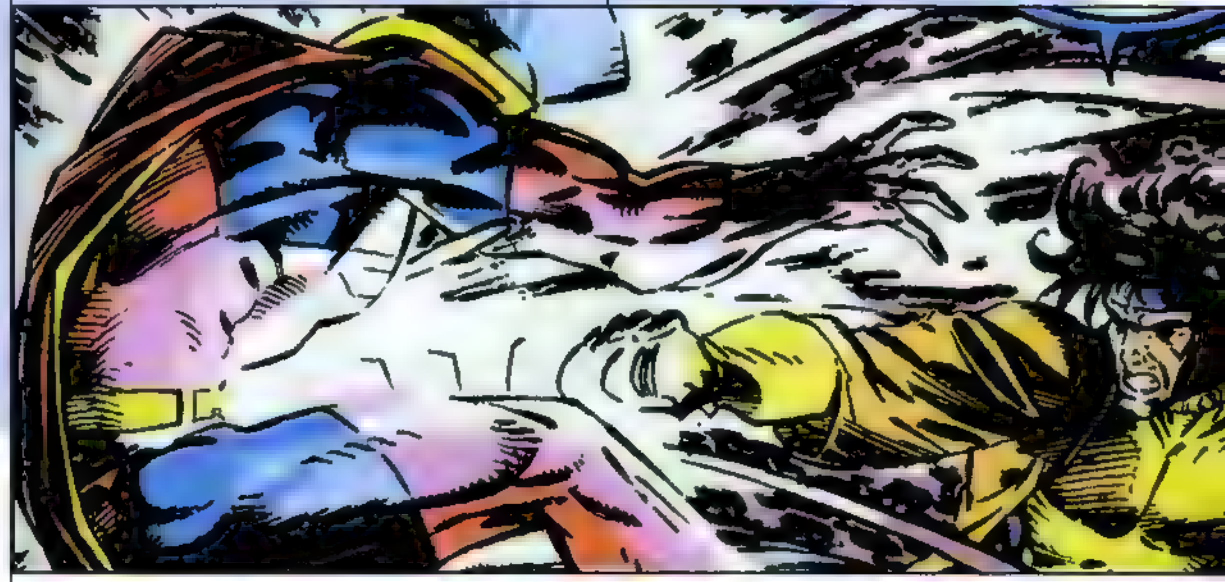
DEAN: Is it true that before you started writing comics you had a strong interest for a career in the theater?
CHRIS: Yes, I have a bachelor's degree in drama. My original goal was to be an actor while doing prose on the side. I started out freelancing for Marvel and one thing led to another. One morning I woke up and realized I was writing more than I was acting, and it paid better.

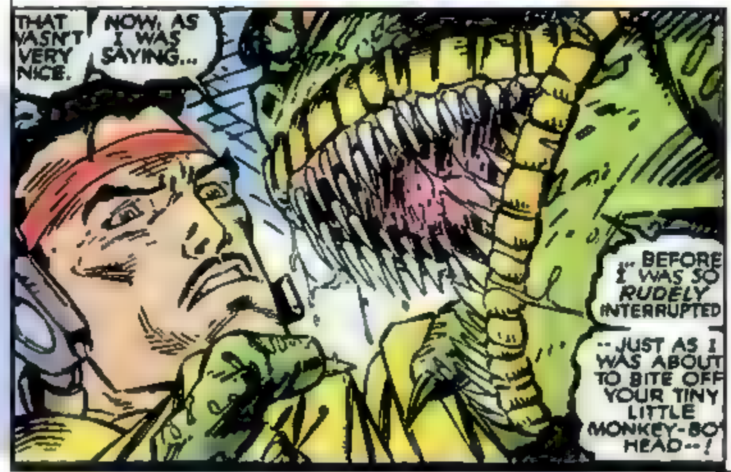
DEAN: Do you feel your acting experience helps you as a writer?
CHRIS: I like to believe it gives me more of a facility with dialogue. Whether my theater background is truly a help or a hindrance, I don't know.

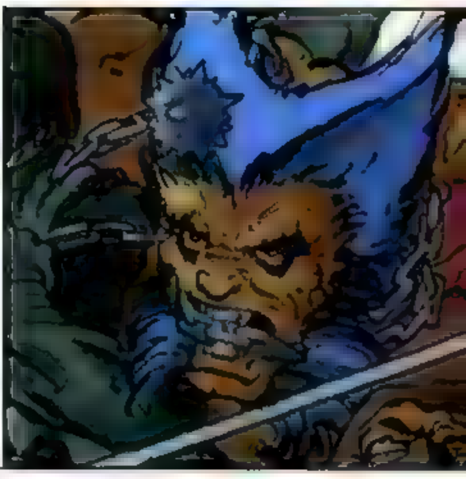
DEAN: Any final thoughts?
CHRIS: Just that for years I'd discuss with associates of mine how we would run this business. We'd say things like, "If I was in charge I'd do things this way." Well, much to my surprise Marvel has called my bluff. It's a tremendous challenge to me; a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. It's a chance to try and make this industry the kind of environment it was, and more, when I first broke in.

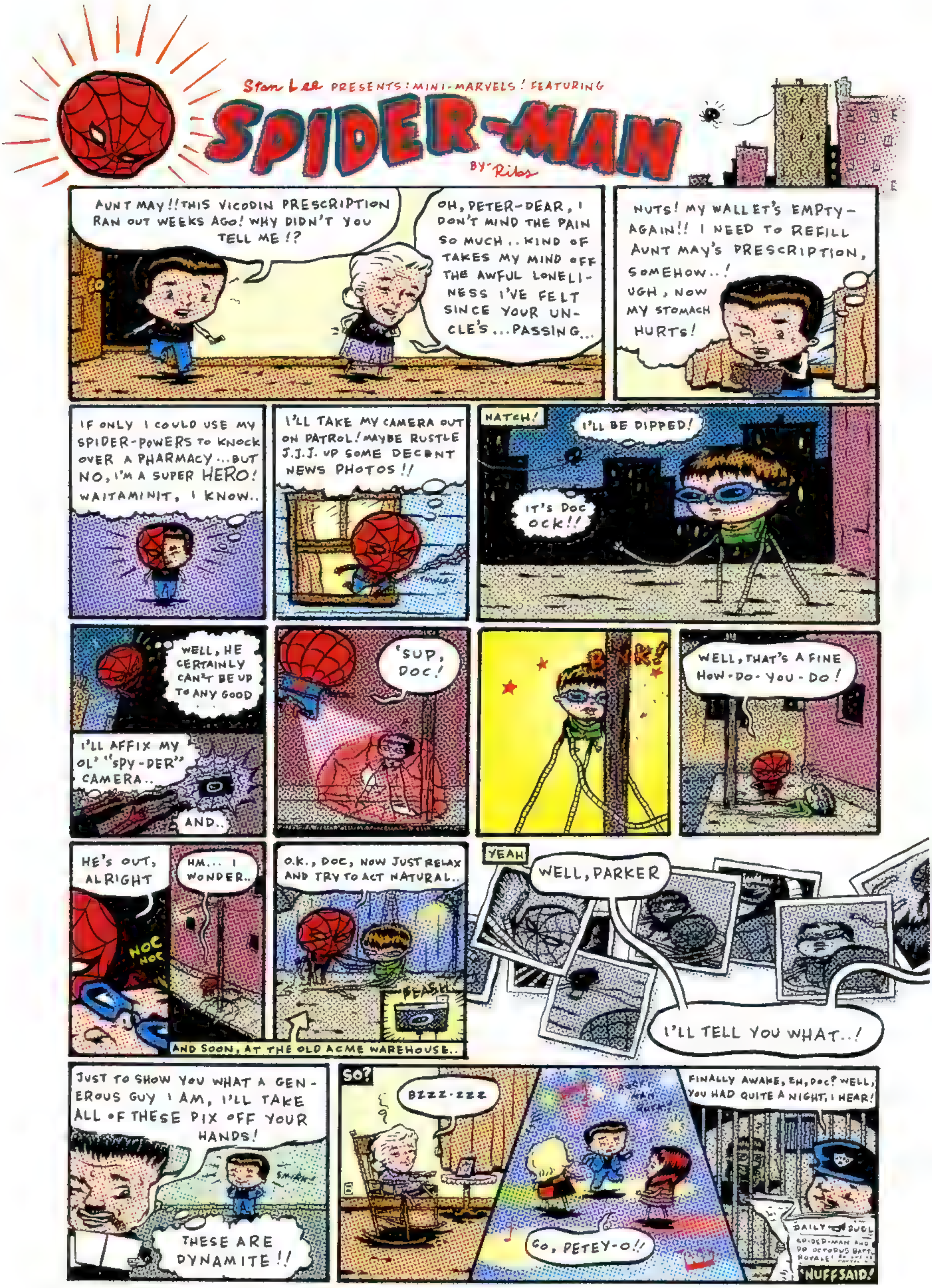
There's no reason why the companies cannot deal equitably with the creative talent to their mutual benefit. The same can be said of the creative talent dealing equitably with the companies. I think we have stories to tell and incredible vehicles in which to tell them. It's simply a matter of finding the best way to give the readers the kind of books that they deserve.

— DEAN DAVIS

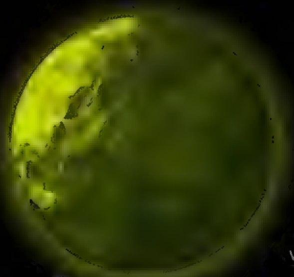








Stan Lee PRESENTS: MINI-MARVELS! FEATURING
SPIDER-MAN
BY Ribs
AUNT MAY!! THIS VICODIN PRESCRIPTION RAN OUT WEEKS AGO! WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME!?
OH, PETER-DEAR, I DON'T MIND THE PAIN SO MUCH.. KIND OF TAKES MY MIND OFF THE AWFUL LONELINESS I'VE FELT SINCE YOUR UNCLE'S ... PASSING...
NUTS! MY WALLET'S EMPTY— AGAIN!! I NEED TO REFILL AUNT MAY'S PRESCRIPTION, SOMEHOW..! UGH, NOW MY STOMACH HURTS!
IF ONLY I COULD USE MY SPIDER-POWERS TO KNOCK OVER A PHARMACY ... BUT NO, I'M A SUPER HERO! WAITAMINIT, I KNOW..
I'LL TAKE MY CAMERA OUT ON PATROL! MAYBE RUSTLE J.J.J. UP SOME DECENT NEWS PHOTOS!!
NATCH!
I'LL BE DIPPED!
IT'S DOC OCK!!
WELL, HE CERTAINLY CAN'T BE UP TO ANY GOOD
I'LL AFFIX MY OL' "SPY-DER" CAMERA..
AND..
'SUP, DOC!
BONK!
WELL, THAT'S A FINE HOW-DO-YOU-DO!
HE'S OUT, ALRIGHT
HM... I WONDER..
NOC NOC
O.K., DOC, NOW JUST RELAX AND TRY TO ACT NATURAL..
FLASH!
AND SOON, AT THE OLD ACME WAREHOUSE..
YEAH
WELL, PARKER
I'LL TELL YOU WHAT..!
JUST TO SHOW YOU WHAT A GENEROUS GUY I AM, I'LL TAKE ALL OF THESE PIX OFF YOUR HANDS!
SMIRK
THESE ARE DYNAMITE!!
SO?
BZZZ-ZZZ
GO, PETEY-O!!
FINALLY AWAKE, EH, DOC? WELL, YOU HAD QUITE A NIGHT, I HEAR!
DAILY BUGLE
SPIDER-MAN AND DR OCTOPUS BATTLE ROYALE!
'NUFF SAID!



Death (the stay-dead-and-never-return type, not the see-you-next-crossover-'cause-I-was-just-foolin' kind). Sure, it doesn't happen all that often as far as the Marvel Universe is concerned, but over the years, many of the House Of Ideas' most memorable characters have been asked to make the ultimate sacrifice in one way or another. Whether it be willingly or as a result of circumstances beyond their control, the passing of these individuals sends shock waves throughout the universe. And although all their deaths are tragic, some are certainly more influential than others. So, just in case you were wondering, here are . . .

The FIVE Most Significant DEATHS in the marvel universe

Ben Parker

IDENTITY: Uncle to Peter Parker, the Amazing Spider-Man
PASSED AWAY IN: AMAZING FANTASY #15
HOW IT HAPPENED: Ben and May Parker did not raise their young nephew Peter—whom they had taken in after his parents were killed—to be a fighter. So naturally, when he first acquired the proportionate abilities of a spider, Peter had no interest in fighting crime. Rather, he longed for fame and fortune. Since all this happened back in the day when a guy in a costume swinging from a thread was a big deal to networks, he even made an appearance on national television. Then one night when the opportunity arose for Peter to put his powers to good use and stop a burglar, he decided against it. After all, that type of thing was somebody else's responsibility. Or so he thought. A few days later, young Parker learned the most painful and valuable lesson of his life as fate saw the very same burglar he had let escape murder his Uncle Ben.
SIGNIFICANCE: When he learned that he could have prevented his uncle's death, Peter Parker realized that the old saying, 'With great power must come great responsibility' was invented for a reason. Consequently, he vowed never to dodge his responsibilities again and began a legendary crime fighting career as the Amazing Spider-Man at the expense of his life, career, and wedded bliss. Way to go, Petey!
MORE IMPORTANT STUFF: The death of his Uncle Ben also forced young Peter Parker into the working world. With his Aunt May in financial trouble, Peter snagged a gig as a photographer at the Daily Bugle selling—what else— pics of the hero J.J. Jameson loves to hate, Spider-Man!
THE GIST: If Uncle Ben hadn't died there may never have been a Spider-Man. Peter Parker would have probably had to settle for becoming an award-winning biochemist or something and everybody from Kraven The Hunter to The Kangaroo would have taken over the universe already.

Gwen Stacy

IDENTITY: Peter Parker's girlfriend
PASSED AWAY IN: AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #121
HOW IT HAPPENED: Gwen Stacy was Peter Parker's first real love. Knowing this, the original Green Goblin, who knew Parker was Spidey, got his revenge on the web-slinger by sending Gwen plummeting to her death from atop the George Washington Bridge. By creating what may have been the world's first Bungee Jump, Spidey was able to stop Gwen's fall, only to find that the shock of the tumble had already killed his beloved.
SIGNIFICANCE: Gwen's death threw yet another great weight onto the shoulders of a troubled Peter Parker. Furthermore, Gwen had become the object of a certain Professor Miles Warren's affections. Following her death, the Professor, blaming Spider-Man for her demise, perfected a pesky cloning procedure and eventually become one of Peter Parker's greatest arch-foes, the Jackal.

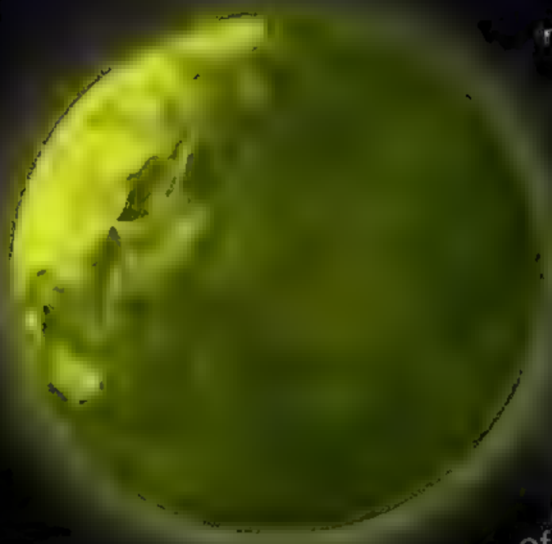
Outside of its effects on Spidey's life, the death of Gwen Stacy shocked comic book readers everywhere. Not only was the death of a major supporting character unheard of at this time, but outside of sheer realism and dramatic punch, this particular incident was structurally uncalled for and thus utterly unexpected.

> *"The death of Gwen Stacy basically broke all the rules. If she could die, anybody could die."*
> Tom DeFalco (Writer AMAZING SPIDERMAN)

MORE IMPORTANT STUFF: While alive, Gwen found herself in competition for Peter's affections with another young lady named Mary Jane Watson. But she had no reason to worry. At the time, Peter's heartstrings were unanimously wrapped around Gwen.
THE GIST: If Gwen Stacy had lived, the Jackal and subsequently Ben Reilly, Kane, and all them other clone types may never have existed. In addition, although Mary Jane would have probably still had eyes for young Parker, chances are they would have been green with envy as Gwen, and not MJ, took the stroll down the aisle with ole Petey. 'Sorry Tiger, you just missed the jackpot!'

Punisher's Family

PASSED AWAY IN: MARVEL PREVIEW #2
HOW IT HAPPENED: On leave from the U.S. Marine Corps, Frank Castle decided to do the family thing and picnic in Central Park with his wife and two children. Unfortunately for all involved, the Castle family chose the Sheep Meadow green, the very scene where a ruthless mob murder was to be carried out. Witness to the killing, the Castle family was targeted for extermination themselves. Only Frank survived the ordeal, watching helplessly as his young son, daughter, and wife were cut down amid a hail of bullets.
SIGNIFICANCE: Frustrated with the authorities' lack of action to bring the men that killed his family to justice, Frank Castle took matters into his own hands. Incorporating much of the training he had received as a Marine, a seemingly unlimited arsenal of specialized weapons, and his newly found lust for vengeance, he became the Punisher: a vigilante with a reputation for acting as his own judge, jury, and cold-blooded executioner.
MORE IMPORTANT STUFF: The Punisher has killed numerous criminals, some convicted, some not, and is indirectly responsible for the death of S.H.I.E.L.D. commander Nick Fury. Also, he came up with that



really cool skull costume.

THE GIST: Had his family not been murdered that afternoon, Frank Castle would have never become the Punisher, a man who has saved thousands, perhaps millions, of innocent lives through his extreme form of justice.

Captain Marvel

PASSED AWAY IN: THE DEATH OF CAPTAIN MARVEL graphic novel

HOW IT HAPPENED: Mar-vell, son of the Kree Empire, abandoned his own people in order to become Captain Marvel, Earth's cosmic protector. During a confrontation with a villain named Nitro, Mar-vell was forced to come into direct contact with a deadly nerve gas in order to prevent it from escaping into the atmosphere. As a result, a dark cancer began growing within him.

Although Captain Marvel's Nega-Bands kept him from succumbing to the disease right away, the cancer eventually mutated and spread throughout his body. Soon after, he passed away surrounded by his numerous friends and peers.

SIGNIFICANCE: Although a number of Marvel characters had died previous to Mar-vell's passing, none had experienced such a mundane—as far as super heroes go anyway—death to this point.

Even though he battled hundreds of villains and saved thousands of lives, Captain Marvel did not die in the blink of an eye; his demise was not the result of a miscalculated maneuver or a sidekick who got his left mixed up with his right at a crucial moment. Rather, Mar-vell carried the weight of his sickness for quite some time before informing his friends of its inevitable outcome. He suffered from weakness, weight loss, waves of unbearable pain, and shed his own tears for those he was to leave behind. The significance of his death, therefore, lies not as much in the actual event as it does in his story.

MORE IMPORTANT STUFF: THE DEATH OF CAPTAIN MARVEL was the very first Graphic Novel published by Marvel Comics. Clearly, the format was quite a hit. Furthermore, although he died in 1982, to this day Captain Marvel is, more often then not, the first hero who comes to mind when the subject of permanent death in comics is discussed.

THE GIST: If not for the unique and realistic nature of Captain Marvel's passing, the subject of death in the comic book medium would not have broadened as considerably as it did at the time. As a result, the deaths of characters like Jim Wilson and Illyana Rasputin may never have been portrayed accordingly.

Bucky

PASSED AWAY IN: flashback in THE AVENGERS (original series) #4 & THE AVENGERS #56

HOW IT HAPPENED: While still a teenager, James 'Bucky' Barnes was appointed as Captain America's sidekick. Together these two fearless heroes managed many a narrow escape and chalked up numerous victories for the good old red-white-and-blue team. But not so in one particular episode in 1945. While attempting to stop an explosive-filled drone plane that Baron Zemo had stolen, both heroes made a jump for the aircraft. Unable to grab a hold, Captain America was sent plunging into the icy waters off the coast of Newfoundland. Bucky was not as fortunate. Believing he could defuse the booby- trapped aircraft, he hung on and lost his life moments later when the plane exploded.

SIGNIFICANCE: After seeing the drone plane explode and striking the water, Captain America admitted that he 'didn't care if [he himself] lived or died'. Arguably, witnessing his partner's death may have affected him to the point where he let himself sink into what could have been a watery grave. Regardless, Captain America survived as he was frozen in an ice floe and eventually revived by the

original Avengers some twenty years later.

MORE IMPORTANT STUFF: Although deeply saddened by his sidekick's death, Captain America found that in spirit, Bucky could live again through Cap's selfless acts and heroism. Not to mention in recurring flash backs.

> *"Bucky's death gave Cap a sense of responsibility that ties him with Spider-Man in terms of what he expects of himself and the type of thing that he would never let happen again."*
> *Mark Waid (writer Captain America)*

THE GIST: If Bucky had not died (and either defused the plane or just fallen off like Cap), both he and Captain America may have had the strength to save themselves from the icy waters below. As a result, Cap wouldn't have been preserved to adventure in the modern day.

[Stay tuned next month for The Five Most Significant Resurrections in the Marvel Universe and hear Tim Tuohy say: "Hey, this is, like, a two part thing. Rad!"]

HONORABLE MENTIONS:

Aunt May
Passed Away In: AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #400

Aunt May, the beloved guardian of Peter Parker, died quietly in her home after being hospitalized for quite some time. The strength of her character, as well as her influence on Peter, was made clear shortly before her death when May revealed she had been aware of her nephew's secret identity all along.

Ben Reilly
Passed Away In: PETER PARKER, SPIDER-MAN #75

Still believing himself to be the true Spider-Man and Peter Parker the lowly clone, Ben Reilly gave his life fighting the newly returned Green Goblin. Although tragic, his passing, and the subsequent revelation that Peter was the true Spidey, made life (for heroes and fans alike) that much more enjoyable!

Sue Richards' Miscarriage
Passed Away In: FANTASTIC FOUR #267

This unnamed child of Sue and Reed Richards was miscarried as a result of the circumstances of his/her conception in the Negative Zone. Significance? What with creating the pocket universe following the events of Onslaught, the Richards' second child, Franklin, proved himself a powerhouse of god-like proportions. Consider for a moment what the Marvel Universe would (or wouldn't) be like if Franklin's sibling had survived and proved him/herself to be the dominant Richards offspring! Yipe!!!

Morlocks
Passed Away In: UNCANNY X-MEN #'s 210-213

The reasons behind the seemingly senseless slaughter of these mutant outcasts are known only to Mr. Sinister, the man responsible for hiring the merciless Marauders to carry out their demise. While battling to save the remaining Morlocks, the X-Men's roster as well as their very lives were changed forever. Later, this tragedy came back to haunt Xavier's former students in the "Trial of Gambit."

Jim Wilson
Passed Away In: THE INCREDIBLE HULK #420

A good friend of both Rick Jones and the Incredible Hulk, Jim Wilson died of AIDS-induced pneumonia in a story that was as unique as it was unforgettable. His tale and Marvel's willingness to tell it broke new ground and changed THE INCREDIBLE HULK forever.

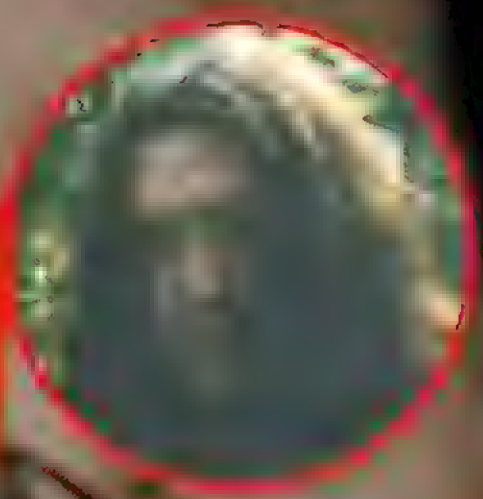
Illyana Rasputin
Passed Away In: UNCANNY X-MEN #303

Once a New Mutant and younger sister of X-Man Colossus, Illyana was the first to contract and die of the dreaded Legacy Virus. Her passing signaled the beginning of a string of illnesses and subsequent deaths among mutants, and later, the human population.

—Robert Piotrowski

SPOTLIGHTING MARVEL'S OWN CULT HERO

POND SCUM



BY LYSA HAWKINS

Pond Scum, who sometimes, although rarely, is called Scott Elmer, was born in a cross fire hurricane on the first of February, 1962. His father claimed that he was conceived at a Drive-In, during the movie, The Blob. He grew up in Schaghticoke, New York, where as "Scum" puts it: "Men are men and the sheep are ...well ...you know."

Scum graduated from the Joe Kubert School of Cartoon & Graphic Art in 1991 and started working for Marvel in 1993 under John Romita Sr. He served as one of Romita's Raiders until 1994 and then came back to the Art Department again in 1995. Currently, he works alongside Michael Golden and Darren Auck.

Through his self-deprecating humor, he gave himself the Pond Scum tag-line in order to make sure he wasn't soon forgotten. It worked! Over the years, Scum has found his likeness displayed in several different comics, from several different companies, and has befriended most of the greats in the industry.

His art is painted on the patio walls of the cartoonists' haven, Openers, a bar near the Marvel offices, where you might just catch a glimpse of this soft-spoken man with long black hair wearing a flannel shirt. If you get the opportunity to say hello, do so, for you'll realize mighty quickly what a great guy the man called Pond Scum truly is.

THE SCUM FILES, just the facts, man...

Comic [illegible]: Strange Tales #178, 1975—1st Jim Starlin "Warlock".

Comi[illegible]: PREACHER, SANDMAN MYSTERY THEATER, ASTRO CITY.

Your c[illegible]stime: Playing Tackle Toss Across.

Actor w[illegible] play [illegible]: Marty Allen (Who??)

Last goo[illegible]: Jackie Brown.

Favorite an[illegible]: Saber-toothed Tree Gopher.

Other jobs[illegible]: Worked as a cashier/stock boy at the Ding Dong Dairy and Deli in Rockaway, New Jersey and worked as a professional rock mover in upstate New York (no joke).

Drink of champions: Budweiser (King of Beers).

Is Pond Scum a charac[illegible] what [illegible]: It's a character I smell like.

What's the greatest ro[illegible]: The Mentors. (But Scum also has a perversion for '70s one-hit wonders.)

Any creative side projects?: Creator of the Razor Thong and Captain Jack Knife, Giant Rat Fighter.

Besides being a great artist, d[illegible]alents?: Once won a gross-out contest by eating someone else's booger and was crowned hopscotch champion of Denmark.

Any other interesting [illegible]?: Once broke every bone in my face during a car accident when I was eighteen.

Any last comments?: I am not a monster.

REAL NAME: James DeSimone
DATE OF BIRTH: 10/22/68
OCCUPATION:
Designer (currently on Marvel [illegible]SION and Fleer Skybox trading cards)
FIRST APPEARED IN [illegible] UNIVERSE:
As the Assistant Art Dir[illegible] Mariano Nicieza
BASE OF OPERA[illegible]hawken, New Jersey
DUAL IDENT[illegible]—Creative Guy'
KNOWN CON[illegible]
Carolyn (wife), Ji[illegible] (equally creative guy), Rick Van Velsor [illegible]
Joel Rogers (illus[illegible]elda (don't ask), and Penny the Bulldog.
MAJOR ENEMIE[illegible]aeinated coffee and articles with too muc[illegible]

I pretty much do whatever comes along. Since there are a number of freelancers working on any given issue, it varies from month to month.

[illegible] working for Tim Tuohy really like?
It's not that bad. He pretty much lets me do what I want. Usually he just hands me the material and says, 'Here, make it look pretty.' Then from time to time, he makes me redo it.

What's your [illegible]vorite section of Marvel VISION?
Timeslip, by far. It's always interesting to see different takes on existing characters. The Guy Davis Iron Man [Issue #4—Continuity Cop Tim] was amazing. That's how I always saw Iron Man myself, kind of a homemade hero.

DESIGN

Spotlighting those marvelously talented people who have helped the House of Ideas redesign the world of comics, it's MARVEL'S . . .

What exactly do you do?
I own a design studio named Frontal Lobe Creative—you know, like the brain? It's really a team effort. We take the raw copy, photography and art that Tim wants in the articles he assigns us and we design their look.

Tell me about how you got to this point in your career.
I was in between design jobs and working as a bartender to pay the bills when I met Mariano Nicieza. He'd come into the bar where I worked with a friend and we just started talking. I told him I was a designer and he asked if I could come in and show my portfolio. I was like, 'Whoo Hooo! What time tomorrow should I be there?' I ended up working for Marvel as a designer for the advertising department for about four years before I started Frontal Lobe Creative.

Your first Marvel VISION credit was as a photographer. What's the story behind that?
Because I used to do portfolio reviews at conventions and Tim knew I had a background in photography, he asked me to take pictures of any creator I saw. So in the very first issue of Marvel VISION, there's a picture of Humberto Ramos that I took.

What aspects of Marvel VISION do you work on?

What's the process by which MV gets designed?
It all starts when Tim and Julio send me a stack of comics that pertain to the subject or talent featured in a particular article, a disk with some artwork, and the raw copy. Then what I usually do is read the article to get a feel for it before sitting down with a sketch pad and figure out where stuff is going to go. But sometimes it's not that easy. For example, we weren't given anything as far as visuals went for the editorial page in #27. Tim just said, 'Make it look Holiday.' So we had to build the entire page out of nothing.

What's the one thing you want people to know about you?
I'm a very calm person and I've always had this saying: 'It's only comics.' A lot of people in the industry never understood that. They'd be like, 'What?! B-But Spider-Man would never **ever** do that!!!' And I'd be like, 'Relax. It's only comics. It's supposed to be fun. It's not real.' Watch, now that that's out, I'll get fired.

Who are your heroes?
My grandfather. He used to always tell me that it doesn't matter what you do in life as long as you're the best at it. That's always stuck with me.

— Robert Piotrowski

UNSUNG HEROES

TIME SLIP COLOSSUS

Welcome to the Marvel Universe that would have been if today's hottest creators had been around at the birth of Marvel Comics. Think of this as the world that might have been. Think of it as the world that might still be becoming.

Greg Scott is a mystery artist. No one knows him... yet. His inherent talent is about to be found in STAR TREK: UNLIMITED #9 and STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE #15. He's taken his unique eye to the poetic iron man of Russia... the mutant X-Man known as Colossus.

For those knowledgeable in the ways of mutantdom, you remember that Colossus was raised on a farm, where its simple ways forever impressed upon him the need to live life in harmony with others, working together for a better life. That is, he knew his need for family. It wasn't until Professor Charles Xavier found the young mutant and introduced him to the X-Men that his life became confused and complex as he fought to protect a world that hated and feared its own champions.

But in the world of TIME SLIP, the world where Greg Scott designs Colossus, the mutant Peter Rasputin is not the man of peace we know. He is the Hammer and Sickle of the Communist state. He is the champion who will build a new future on the anvil of western decadence. He is the champion who will harvest all that is the Soviet Union's "rightful claim" of the world. For here, it was not Charles Xavier who first became aware of the young man's mutant power, but Mother Russia. And like every good servant of the state, Peter does what he is told.

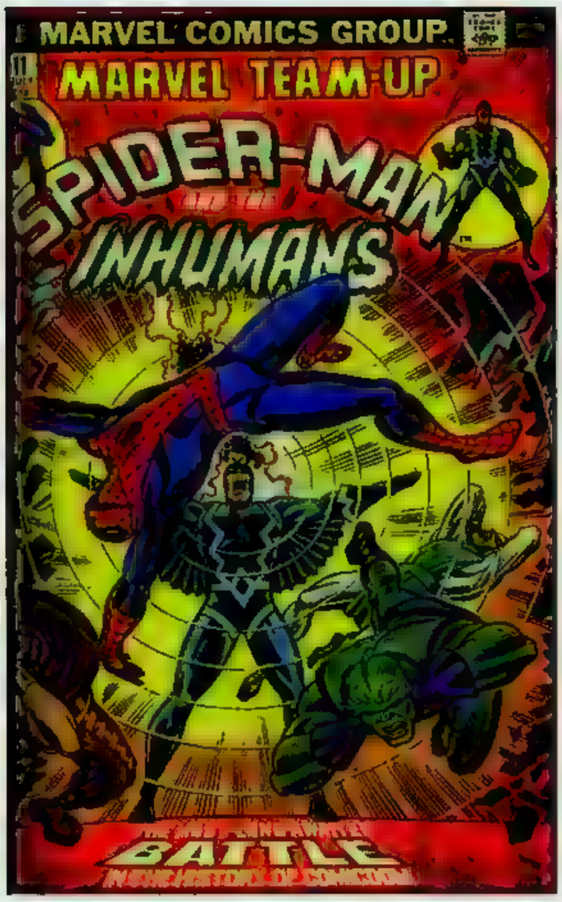
Colossus is the leader of the Soviet Super Soldiers and the beloved champion of his people. Where once the heart of a poet beat within his chest, now it seems that that same heart is the home of raging anger. But where it was once the world that hated and feared him, it is now America that is his sworn enemy. And to Peter, Captain America and the Avengers are the champions of the decayed and rotting West. They are the enemy. An enemy that will fall before his Soviet supremacy.

One might ask, how could this family man change so much? How could the difference in teacher, Xavier or the State, create in Peter such an enemy of life? How could Colossus, in every battle with the Avengers, ignore Cap's pleadings for peace and freedom?

Consider, though, that it may not be Peter who is the enemy, per se. Perhaps he is still the family man he always was. For if the West were to take hold of the Soviet Union, if his enemies were to win, it is not Peter who would suffer ... for what could anyone do to him? No... it is for the sake of his family... his sister, Illyana, his parents and his friends, that he has become the servant of the state.

LEN WEIN:

"Every Time I Think I'm Out, They Keep Pulling Me Back In!"



Len Wein rose to fame as one of Marvel's top writers in the mid-1970's, when he guided the company's big four titles: AMAZING SPIDER-MAN, HULK, FANTASTIC FOUR, and THOR! Listed among his other accomplishments is the fact that he was the first writer of both Wolverine and the new X-Men! After a year spent as Editor In Chief of the Marvel line, Len moved out to California, where he joined his pals (and fellow writers) Marv Wolfman, Roy Thomas, and Gerry Conway. Today, Len works primarily in TV, while still dabbling in comics.

How did you first break into comics?
Sort of accidentally, on purpose. From the time I was about eight or nine years old, I wanted to be in the comic book business. I wanted to be an artist. And so I took all the art training I could. Marv Wolfman and I used to go up to DC Comics every Thursday, back when they had a weekly tour of their offices. We became familiar faces. We came up with our own stories and drew them. Finally, we put together some samples, and we met with Joe Orlando and Carmine Infantino. We showed Joe our art samples. He thought we made much better writers than we did artists. He said, "Do you have any story ideas for HOUSE OF MYSTERY?" So Marv and I both ran home and came up with some ideas. We came back the next day, and Joe bought one of my stories, and I've been a writer ever since.

How did you get into Marvel?
Gerry Conway and I were roommates. Gerry had gone over to [work at] Marvel. Everytime Gerry would leave a book, he kept asking if I'd be interested in taking over. I started with WEREWOLF BY NIGHT, and then MARVEL TEAM-UP, and a couple of other titles along the way. I had to start giving up books at DC. I sort of woke up one morning and discovered I was now working solely for Marvel!

What year did you start working for Marvel?
It must have been about '70, '71.

What are some other titles you worked on?
I did DEFENDERS...HULK...I was offered AMAZING SPIDER-MAN, and I was very, very intimidated. AMAZING SPIDER-MAN, at that point, had only had three regular writers at that point—Stan for 100 or so issues, Roy for a half dozen issues, and then Gerry for the other long run. So I was really, in essence, the third regular writer the book had ever had. Very intimidating. Back then, SPIDER-MAN was the book you aspired to write.

How long were you on AMAZING for?
About two and a half years. I was the one who dumped the clone body! I started right after the clone story. The first scene in my first issue was Spider-Man getting rid of the clone body...and I thought that was the end of it! (laughter)

You were involved in the early issues of the X-MEN. How did that come about?
Roy Thomas had been suggesting for a while Marvel should revive the X-Men as sort of a Blackhawk-like international team of super-heroes. When I was doing the HULK, I was sort of assigned the creation of Wolverine. Roy gave me a name, and I was told to come up with a character to go with it. I decided to make Wolverine a mutant. I figured that on the off chance that they might actually revive the X-Men someday, this way they could use Wolverine, if they wanted. I did not know that I would end up being the guy to revive the X-Men! I don't remember exactly how I ended up with the assignment. But Dave Cockrum was assigned to be the artist.

Dave had a great sketchbook full of characters, ideas, costumes, names, things like that. We sort of went through his book and mixed and matched, changing some of the costumes, combining characters. Originally, the character of Storm was

two other characters—a male character with weather powers and a character with the same name as a Spider-Man villain, the Black Cat. We combined the two characters to get Storm, which is why in the early issues, Storm has these large cat's eyes.

So you worked on GIANT-SIZE X-MEN #1...
Right, and regular 94, and I think I plotted 95.

Why did you leave the book after that?
Well, I was Editor In Chief at that point. I was only capable of writing a book a month, freelance. I had already given up SPIDER-MAN and THOR...I was just doing one book too many. I had the choice between giving up THE HULK, which was my favorite book at that point, or giving up THE X-MEN. I had Chris (Claremont) out there in the Bullpen, saying "I'd like to do (THE X-MEN)!" I figured it was much easier just to pass the X-MEN off. I didn't have the emotional commitment to it that I had to THE HULK at that point.

Do you ever regret not sticking with the X-Men?
Constantly!

Let's talk about THE HULK. How long were you on that book?
I did about four years on it.

Mostly with Herb Trimpe?
Initially. Herb did about half of my issues. Then Sal Buscema took over about halfway into my run, along with Joe Staton on inks.

How did you like working on that book?
Very much. I liked working with both Herb and Sal. They were both terriffic artists. Herb was a great storyteller. He never got the reputation in comics he deserved. His work may not have been as splashy or pretty as some of the other guys', but he always told a great story, and that's what this business is all about. And Sal was right up there with the best of them.

Do you have any favorite Hulk stories that you worked on?
My favorite is the issue that follows the Wolverine story—the one with Hammer and Anvil. It was about an old black street musician who's become a vagabond. He teaches the Hulk to write his own name.

I remember that one. How did you become Editor In Chief?
Stan had been Editor in Chief for a decade, and he passed it on to Roy. After what seemed like two months into his gig, he passed on the mantle to me. Suddenly I was Editor in Chief of 53 books a month! Back in those days, there wasn't an editorial staff. There was a support staff, but there were no hands-on editors. I was in charge of 53 books a month, and it was an inhuman workload. Marv Wolfman was doing the black-and-white (magazines). When I finally cracked under the strain after about a year, Marv started doing some of the color books. They started breaking down the number of books that you were responsible for.

Gerry came in after Marv. I think Gerry lasted three weeks in the job! Archie Goodwin came in for a couple of years. And then Jim Shooter had it broken down so that there was an actual hands-on editor for each book.

Did you like being Editor in Chief?
Except for the strain of it, yeah. It was exciting to be able to sort of control the destiny of the Marvel Universe.

When you left that position, did you leave Marvel?
No. Actually, I stayed on for several years. Roy had managed to create the position of writer/editor. This was based on the assumption that if a person is competent enough to run the entire company, he's certainly competent enough to run his own book. So I moved to the writer/editor position. I was writing and editing three or four books, including THOR and the FF. I also kept the job of cover editor. One of my favorite parts of the job was designing the covers. They liked what I had been doing on them, so I kept that job for another couple of years.

Gradually, the writer/editor position at Marvel was phased out...
Yes. There were also a number of changes going on at DC, and they were desperate to get talent back. Eventually Jenette Kahn made me an offer I couldn't refuse. At DC, I was writing BATMAN, SUPERMAN, and WONDER WOMAN. I sort of went from the top of Marvel to the top of DC!

You were at DC for a number of years.
I wasn't usually with any one company. I managed to stay independent enough where I could freelance for various places. When I started at DC in the early days, I did a lot of work for Gold Key. I wrote a lot of issues of THE TWILIGHT ZONE, I did STAR TREK, I did BORIS KARLOFF, I did their HOT WHEELS book...

What are you working on these days?
As we speak, I am working on the first DREAMING SPECIAL for DC. I did a couple of issues of UNCANNY ORIGINS—I did Dr.Strange and Iron Fist. I'm dialoguing a Steve Ditko I ron Man story for the new black-and-white magazine. And I'm doing a Wendigo one-shot.

Did you create that character?
No. I think Roy did. But I made him famous, because I tied him in with Wolverine.

You do a lot of work in TV these days, correct?
Yes. I just finished writing with Marv and Christy Marx basically the third season of "Reboot," a CGI series currently running in England and Canada. I did "Mummies Alive," I did an episode of "Beast Wars," I did "Pocket Dragon Adventures"...

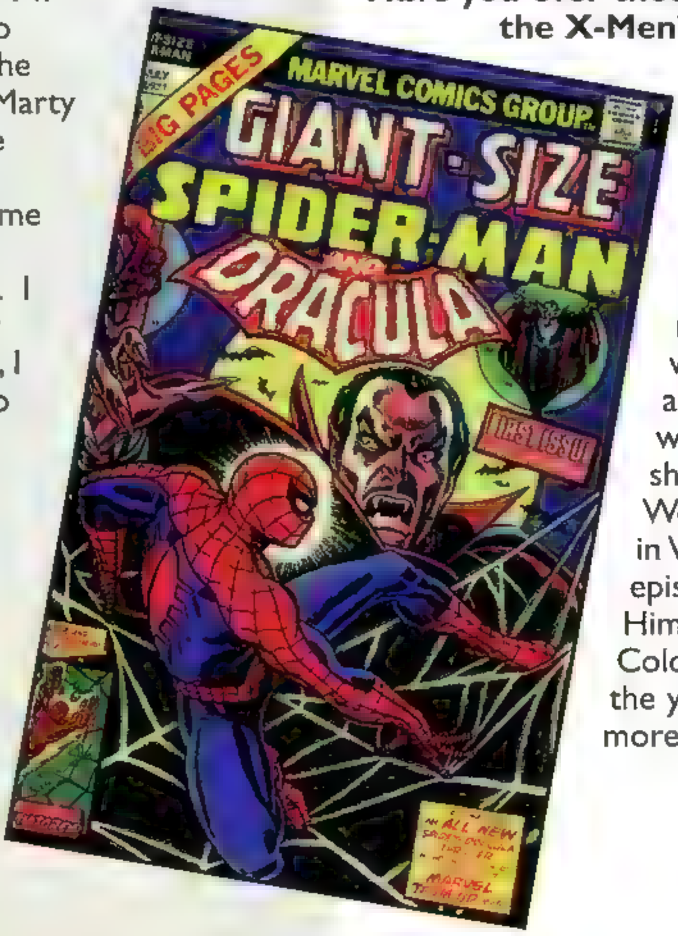
Previously, I did episodes of the animated "Batman" and "X-Men"...I've worked on the "Hulk," "Iron Man"...Most of the characters I've done in comics. And I've done live-action things like "X-O Squad."

You're from the New York area originally, correct?
Yes. I was born in the Bronx in 1948.

When did you move to California?
Eleven years ago.

Did you already have connections in the TV industry before you moved out?
I didn't move out to get into television. I always played in a Friday night poker game with a bunch of friends in the business in New York. I play in a Friday night poker game now out here in L.A. Basically all of my friends moved to California. I was sitting by myself in New York, and I realized that all of the people that I really cared about were on the West Coast. Since I was freelance, I decided to move to California.

I got into television, actually, by accident. I was Editor n Chief for several years at Disney Comics, when they were doing original comics. One of the people I hired at Disney was Marty Pasko, who had been doing live-action TV. He was looking to get back into comics, so I hired him. When the Disney comics started to fold, Marty became the story editor on the animated Batman series. He basically called me up and told me to come in for my first story conference on my first episode. I said, "But I never submitted any stories to you!" He said, "Well, I knew you'd never get around to it, so we gave them a bunch of your old BATMAN comics. They want you to adapt a story that Neal Adams had drawn for you years ago!" And that's how I found myself in television!



And you've been in TV ever since?
Yes. But I like to keep my hand in comics. I keep saying, "Every time I think I'm out, they keep pulling me back in!"

Who are some of your influences as a writer?
Most of my influences are not in comics. The only comic book writer who is an influence on my work is Bob Kanigher. He could tell an emotional story like no one else could. In terms of other writers, Rod Serling was a big influence. Ray Bradbury. Paddy Chayevsky. These days, I like Alan Moore, Neil Gaiman; Kurt Busiek is doing some great work on THUNDERBOLTS...Mark Waid...The top writers are the top writers for a reason.

Which artists would you like to work with that you haven't yet?
I've been very fortunate. I've gotten to work with the vast majority of the artists I like. John Buscema, Neal Adams, Walt Simonson, Jose-Luis Garcia-Lopez...he's one of the unsung legends of the business. He should be a superstar.

Who are some of your favorites that you've worked with?
Walt...and Bernie Wrightson. How could I leave out Bernie and Swamp Thing? Bernie and I used to get along great. We used to finish each other's sentences. I loved working with Walt. It's funny. I did THOR with John Buscema. His stuff was brilliant, but I had a hard time writing it. When John left, Walt took over. It went from being a book I could write in a week and a half to a book I could write in a day. This is no fault of John's—his work was breathtaking. It was just a communication thing. I loved working with Sal Buscema and Dave Cockrum.

Have you ever thought about doing more with the X-Men?
Yeah. I would love to. I've written probably more Wolverine in the television series than I have in the comics. I just love the character. The more I write him, the more I realize how much I enjoy writing him. I like writing his dialogue. Of all the animated shows that I've written, one of my favorite shows was a flashback featuring Wolverine and Captain America in World War II. I did a number of episodes dealing with Wolverine. Him, Storm, Nightcrawler, and Colossus...they've all changed over the years, but I'd still love to do more with them.

—Barry Dutter

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- ☐ FAC X-Factor
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MARVEL'S SILLIEST MOMENTS

MY UNCLE, THE OCTOPUS!

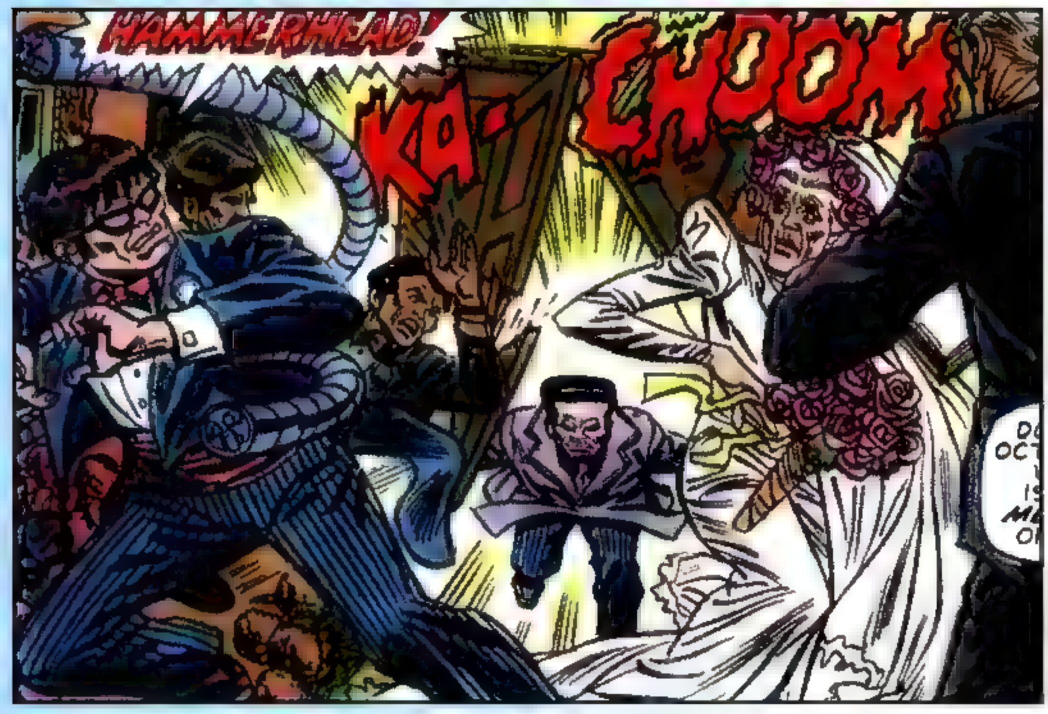
Spider-Man has rescued his Aunt May from some pretty hairy predicaments over the years, but perhaps none were quite so, well, silly as the time May Parker almost married Dr. Octopus!

You read that right, True Believers! Comicdom's favorite doting aunt really did almost tie the knot with one of Spidey's worst enemies! It happened back in AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #131, in a tale that could only have been titled, "My Uncle, My Enemy!" (The issue introduced the immortal phrase, "With this ring, I thee WEB!")

Now, before you think ol' Doc Ock has got a thing for octogenarians, perhaps we should explain that the bad doctor had an ulterior motive! It seems that one of May Parker's relatives had died and had left her the rights to a nuclear reactor located on a remote Canadian island!

Ock learned of this priceless inheritance and realized that if he married May, half of that reactor would be his! And if May should meet with an unfortunate accident after she has become Mrs. Octopus, then the nuclear reactor would be all Otto's! (Of course, Ock could have simply killed Aunt May to start with and get the reactor illegally, but he always did have something of a soft spot for the old lady! After all, May does make one mean stack of wheatcakes!)

Doc Ock is such a smoothie that when he first met Aunt May, back in AMAZING SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL #1, he kidnapped her with such style and finesse, May never even realized she had been kidnapped! Doc even served his hostage tea and Danish pastries! May was so charmed by this eight-armed, pudgy Casanova, she was able to overlook his extra limbs and comment, "It's a pleasure to meet someone with such good manners nowadays!"

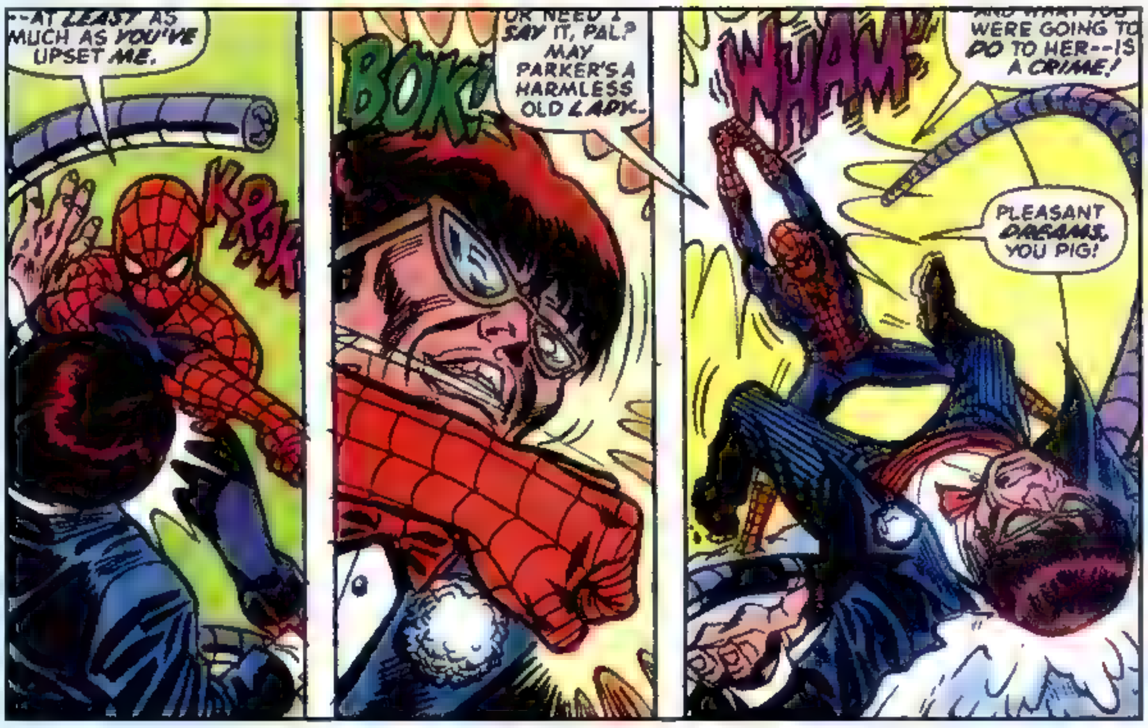


May seemed quite eager to walk down the aisle, arm in arm in arm in arm with Doc Ock. If not for Hammerhead butting in and disrupting the proceedings, Peter Parker would be Doc Ock's nephew, and Uncle Ben would be rolling over in his grave!

It is uncertain how far Doc Ock was willing to go to implement his mad scheme. Would he actually have gone on a honeymoon with this swinging senior citizen? And more importantly, would Marveldom Assembled have been able to stomach the thought?

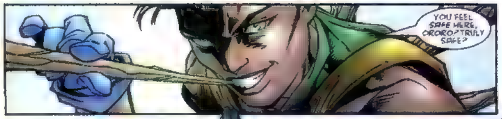
For that matter, if May Parker knew that her nephew was Spider-Man all along (as she implied on her deathbed, ooops!), what the heck was she doing marrying one of Spidey's deadliest foes? Guess the old widow was a lot lonelier than we thought!

Fortunately, Spidey came to the rescue, putting a stop to this unholy union before it could be consummated! As the nuclear plant blew up all around them, Spidey threw his aunt into a plane and then rocketed her to safety. How Spidey learned to fly a plane, when earlier in the issue, he couldn't even drive a car has also never been satisfactorily explained.



Since their aborted wedding, and before May's death, she and Doc Ock remained friends, but they never regained the passion they once had for each other. (Ock's lengthy prison stints haven't helped the relationship any!) Perhaps it's for the best. The whole adventure read more like an "Imaginary Story" from a DC Comic of the 1960's! One almost expected the following issue to feature Spidey turning into a giant, purple gorilla!

–Barry Dutter



"He knew the anguish
of the marrow
The ague of the skeletons;
No contact possible to flesh
Allayed the fever of the bone."
— T. S. Eliot

BEAST FILES

Over the years the X-Men has been the home for the reforming of those members of mutantkind who have used their powers on the "wrong side." Wolverine was the first among us who exhibited less than stalwart behavior, clearly displaying a propensity for violence. Yet through the years and the Professor's guiding hand he has proven an invaluable asset and cornerstone of all the X-Men represent. Rogue is yet another, who as a young teen raised by Mystique, had committed various acts of violence. Gambit would years later prove to be a part of one of the greatest mutant atrocities, dubbed the Mutant Massacre. And our visitor from the future, Bishop, made his debut into our time violently apprehending other time-lost mutant criminals from his future era. Yet none among us have yet been as troubled as the latest member in our ranks, the young woman known only as Marrow.

Marrow's story begins beneath the glimmer of the New York City skyline... far below in the catacombs known as the Morlock Tunnels [See file: Morlocks]. These tunnels, which were claimed as their home, are the unused portions of both the sewer and subway system of New York and once housed a large mutant populace, known as the Morlocks and led by the woman named Callisto [See File: Callisto]. The tunnels were a home to all of the deformed mutants who simply believed that they were better off living apart from humanity until humanity was ready to accept them. Among their number was a little girl known only as Sarah, who though she did not possess any seeming powers save a loss of hair on her head and strangely shaped eyes, was reportedly a rallying point around which all the Morlocks felt a sense of hope and love in the most dismal of environments.

One of the most important points in Morlock history occurred with the trial by combat between Storm and Callisto. This battle was fought without powers, only with their respective skill with knives. Storm surprisingly won the duel, stabbing Callisto without killing her. Thus Storm inherited the mantle of leadership to the Morlocks, and immediately offered the Morlocks a place at Xavier's School to live. This offer was turned down, and they elected to remain beneath the city streets. Young Sarah viewed Callisto as a being of darkness and in her youth saw Storm as a bright goddess who might lead their people to the surface. Her hopes were in vain.

A scant year later, the Morlock tunnels were besieged by the merciless Marauders.[See file: Henchmen] and a multitude of them were slaughtered. Sarah somehow survived this tragedy with the help of Gambit, and through it all, still kept her sense of hope. This hope was shattered a year later with the coming of Colossus' [See File: Colossus] brother Mikhail. Mikhail went mad and used his reality and dimensional shifting powers to shunt almost the entire Morlock populace to another world. On this world where survival was next to impossible, the Darwinistic belief that the strongest should survive was paramount. Mikhail's castle was placed on the top of a mountain peak called "the hill" which could only be reached by those strong enough to survive the climb plus combat all others who wished to reach the top as well.

It was in this environment that hatred welled up inside of her. She blamed the "upworlders" and even Storm for the state of their lives. For in her mind, had Storm led her people to overthrow the humans above, they would have lived their lives in the sun where they truly belonged. Perhaps this is what drove her up "the hill" and caused her to become the leader of a group of mutants, who had similarly made the climb, called Gene Nation.

Time passed differently for those on this world of Morlocks, and while it may have only been months for our time, nearly a decade had progressed for them. However, when Gene Nation returned to Earth, they brought all of their hatred for humanity and the X-Men with them. In their first known act they committed mass murder at a New York nightclub. Later two of their members committed other acts of murder in New Orleans. Then finally on the eve of the anniversary of the Morlock Massacre, they set out to destroy a subway full of humans they kidnapped with incendiary bombs strapped to their chained bodies.

Wolverine, Callisto, Colossus and Storm all responded to this threat, only to find that Sarah had wanted to make a point about Storm's weakness. The timing mechanism to the bombs was fused with Sarah's own heart. The only way to stop the bombs from detonating, she told Storm, would be to stop her heart. With this revelation, Marrow gave Storm two of her own bone daggers, and the two dueled in similar fashion to how Storm and Callisto had years prior. Once again, Storm proved her resolve the only way she could, by ripping out young Sarah's heart with the timing mechanism still attached.

Marrow survived due to an oddity of her body which seems to have been born with two hearts and other extra organs. However, her hatred seemingly was not diminished. She reappeared with Callisto in a nightclub where Lila Cheney [See File: Lila Cheney] was performing. Here she faced off against Cable and Thornn [See Files: Cable and Thornn] in yet another duel and succeeded in stopping her. A short while after this she faced off against Spider-Man [See File: Spider-Man] in her unsuccessful attempt to assassinate government agent Peter Henry Gyrich. Spider-Man allowed her to leave after a stern lecture and it was a short while later that she met up once again with the X-Men.

Perhaps through the examples set by the X-Men and Spider-Man, a change of heart, pardon the pun, had occurred within Sarah. As it now appeared, she was more willing to amend her ways and use her powers as a member of the X-Men. However, the moral dilemma remains for the rest of the X-Men. Do we admit a member among us who has so ruthlessly consented to the slaughter of so many innocent humans? Do we have the right to make such a judgment call? If so, where do we draw the line, and what price do we pay for such power and authority? More frightening still, what if our hopes and efforts are in vain, and we only succeed in strengthening the skills of a deranged psychopath?

NOTES:

Marrow is a peculiar mutant at best. Her body can seemingly continuously produce extra bone marrow at a rapid rate over which she has no control. These bones stick out of her body in various spots, and she can literally pull them out of herself without undue harm. Once out of her, the bones resemble large daggers and have a cutting edge on them which prove to be just as sharp as the bone claws of Wolverine. How many of these daggers she can produce and use at any given time is unknown. Further peculiarities are the strange configuration of her eyes and circulatory system. What the exact purposes of these mutations are is as of yet a mystery.

Origin Of The Species:

HAWKEYE!

The Blue-Collar Avenger!

What's the deal with Hawkeye? He's a member of The Avengers, right? They're supposed to be "Earth's Mightiest Heroes," right? We're talking about a team made up out of such heavy-hitters as Iron Man, Thor, The Vision and The Scarlet Witch, so what's Hawkeye doing there?

All the others have special powers and abilities, but Hawkeye has none. He's just a guy in a purple suit who's really good with a bow and arrow. Even Captain America, who technically has no super powers either, has superb leadership qualities and a keen military mind to back up his skill with his shield.

Hawkeye is just a perpetually angry and sarcastic guy with a cutting sense of humor.

While Marvel has a long history of villains-turned-heroes, with such characters as Rogue, Silver Surfer, Moon Knight, and Wonder Man, among others, there are only a few like Hawkeye. You see, he wasn't bad, just misguided and misunderstood, like Rogue and Scarlet Witch.

One of the first things Captain America did when he took over the Avengers was to lead a modest new line-up. The team was a foursome, consisting simply of Cap, Wanda, the Scarlet Witch, a mutant sorceress, Quicksilver, her fleet-footed, hot-tempered brother and Hawkeye. While Hawkeye would challenge and criticize Cap incessantly, deep down it was implied that he really admired him. Cap also had his hands full, as Hawkeye and Quicksilver started out as two hot-tempered Avengers. Usually, whenever Hawkeye took a swing at him, Cap easily put him on his back.

Hawkeye was Clint Barton, a carnival marksman, whose excellent skills with the bow and arrow made him a popular midway attraction, nicknamed "Hawkeye." Watching Iron Man thwart a crime, Barton was inspired to come up with a colorful name and costume for himself, "Hawkeye, The Marksman." Unfortunately, he was wrongly identified as a thief and found himself in battle with his one-time hero Iron Man.

Later, Hawkeye was recruited by Russian spy Madame Natasha Romanoff, the "Black Widow." The brash but noble Hawkeye would never knowingly betray his country, so Romanoff faked a romantic attraction to him and begged him to protect her. She duped the chivalrous Barton into attacking Iron Man, an act the lovestruck archer did with relish, nearly defeating the golden Avenger.

While he always hits a bullseye with the bow, he's been a washout with the ladies. Hawkeye always seems to pick women out of his league; his first true love, Madame Natasha, the Black Widow used him and he fell for it. Hawkeye eventually broke through Natasha's cold Communist exterior once or twice but then she would trick him again and again.

Natasha would always play Hawkeye for a fool. When she helped a gaggle of super-villains attack the Avengers, she helped them get away by blocking Hawkeye. While he could drop them with a stun arrow, he thought "I can't do it! Not to her...I just can't!" The Black Widow gloated "It worked! I knew his love for me would prove his undoing!" In time they did genuinely fall in love.

After The Black Widow went from being a spy to a superheroine, Hawkeye tried to rekindle their relationship and reclaim her. Unfortunately, her then-current boyfriend,

Daredevil, stomped him with Natasha's approval.

When that didn't work out, Hawkeye began to have feelings for the beautiful mutant, The Scarlet Witch. He revealed that he'd cared for her ever since he first met her, in their days as one half of the Avengers but, insult of insults, she preferred the love of an android, The Vision. It's one thing to lose out to a swashbuckler like Daredevil, but what does it do to a guy's ego when a girl prefers someone/something that's not altogether human?

Unfortunately, when Hawkeye finally landed and married a superheroine all his own, the fetching S.H.I.E.L.D. agent Mockingbird, he still hadn't found happiness. At first they were very happy, but their marriage eventually boiled down to arguing, bickering and divorce. They reconciled, even though she helped the U.S. Government storm the Avengers Compound in California and dismantle his one-time romantic rival, The Vision. But happiness again was not to be. During their tenure with the West Coast Avengers Mockingbird was killed in action.

The typical Avengers cover would show some rampaging monster trashing the team, as Iron Man, Cap, Scarlet Witch and Thor are fighting it. Hawkeye would usually be depicted on the sidelines, with an arrow cocked in his bow, the head sizzling, to show it was a weapon of immense power. Hawkeye has many trick arrows: some to give you nausea, make you dizzy or use enough sonics to blast you into unconsciousness.

He puts an unhealthy amount of his self-image on his bow and arrow. When they get smashed in THE SECRET WARS, it's almost a castration motif, with Hawkeye pining away about how useless he is without them. Get over it, Hawk!

In one of the biggest career decisions ever made by a major Marvel hero, Hawkeye decided to scrap the bow and arrow thing, take Hank Pym's growth serum and become a giant hero named "Goliath!" You know when a character is taking career advice from the former Ant-Man, he's in a bad way! Happily, he came back to his senses and resurrected his career in archery.

Hawkeye is riddled with self-doubt; he frequently feels out-of-place and out-of-his league when fighting alongside The Avengers. He tries to bluff his teammates with a false bravado, but they can see right through him. He's a necessary part of the team, his sarcasm puncturing the pomposity of the others. When Hawkeye was out of The Avengers, writers tried substituting similar stand-ins, like the Swordsman and Dane Whitman, the Black Knight but it didn't work; there was something about Hawkeye that wouldn't translate with the others.

Only Hawkeye could get away with calling Captain America "a blowhard" or "Methuselah" (Hawkeye teases Cap about being old because of the 50 years he spent frozen in ice), The Mighty Thor "Blondie" and "Goldilocks." Like The Thing in The Fantastic Four, his blue-collar viewpoint kept the team from being overly serious. Hawkeye was the malcontent, unhappy unless he was running the show(which, it was hinted, he didn't really want to do—he was more happy complaining!).

Hawkeye's other favorite activity in The Avengers was quitting. Everytime he did, it would be a variation on this quote from AVENGERS #109—"That tears it! I've HAD IT as an Avenger! Right here and now- Hawkeye's cuttin' out!" In an earlier issue, when Captain America tries to keep the team together, Hawkeye states "It's too late for any pep talks, Rogers! The party's over, we're phfftt!"

He would knock Captain America all the time, usually with Scarlet Witch or Quicksilver yelling at him "Why, you swell-headed braggart!" but it was clear Hawkeye knocked him because he felt insecure. Deep down, he envied Cap's selflessness. After Steve Rogers quit being Captain America, he found himself attacked by a stalker named "The Golden Archer." At story's end, the Archer revealed himself as Hawkeye, in his attempt to keep Cap in the hero game.

Because of his surliness and sarcasm, he's the perfect team member, the rebel. As he's one of the many Avengers without his own title, he's the perfect member. There's never a continuity glitch with him. You can just assume that while Cap, Thor, Iron Man and company are saving the world in their own books, Hawk's playing Battleship with Jarvis the Butler!

Because Hawkeye looked pretty weak being carried into battle by Iron Man or Thor and the other Avengers, he was eventually given a flying cycle that looked like a retooled Harley Davidson. He's also been allowed to pilot the Avengers Quinjet every now and then.

When Hawk (as he's been nicknamed) became a leader in his own right, with the West Coast Avengers, he became less tolerant of complainers and understood how Captain America must have felt with him on the team. When he choose to lead the ridiculous team of second stringers known as "The Great Lakes Avengers," one of them smart-mouthed him and Hawkeye snapped "Keep the sarcasm out of your voice, buster."

Hawkeye showed he's a great leader by taking this team of misfits (who include Flatman, the corpulant Big Bertha, Dinah Soar—a sexy woman/dinosaur hybrid and Mister Immortal, a cocky idiot whose main power is getting killed!) and used them to save The Avengers, even taking on a brainwashed Scarlet Witch and She-Hulk. At the end, even the reserved Vision stated, "My compliments, Hawkeye. Your new team is most efficient."

As the head of the WCA, he was reunited with his wife, Wonder Man, Wanda and the others, as well as his former inspiration/sparring partner, Iron Man. The responsibility changed him for the better. As leader, he even got to yell "Avengers Assemble!" He still had trouble with USAgent, the government-appointed Captain America who was so conservative, he was just to the right of Attila the Hun.

Although he has one of the coolest costumes in comics, that leather purple number he wears, Hawkeye ditched it briefly in the swinging '70s to wear a powder-blue outfit and headband, thus exposing his secret identity to the world. Besides the unfortunate side-effect of making him look like a big sissy, this did nothing for him. Running around in a generic outfit that made him look like an extra on "Xena" was unbecoming, so he was soon back in his purple togs. Hawkeye ditched them again in the late '80s, for another suit that showed his real face, but soon returned to his first and best costume.

Hawkeye has long been a closet favorite of many Marvelites, even though he's never had his own ongoing book, just two limited series along with his appearences in team books and the occasional issue of SOLO AVENGERS. You'll notice that DC's boring bowman, The Green Arrow, didn't become interesting, riddled with self-doubt and frequently quitting the Justice League until after Hawkeye was created.

Hawkeye is a working-class hero. At one point when he quit The Avengers, he found he had barely enough to buy a cup of coffee (and then, to add insult to injury, found he was using the same restaurant as another poverty-stricken New Yorker, the Absorbing Man). He's clearly not in the hero game for money. AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!

By Pat Jankiewicz

THE GREATEST COMICS NEVER SEEN

SOMETIMES THERE ARE PROJECTS THAT ARE BEGUN THAT ARE NEVER FINISHED, PROJECTS THAT EXIST THAT ARE SURE-FIRE HITS... UNTIL THEY THEMSELVES ARE HIT BY SOME UNFORTUNATE AND UNFORESEEN DILEMMA... AN EDITOR LEAVES, A WRITER DOESN'T GET THE PLOT IN QUICKLY ENOUGH AND THE ARTIST IS FORCED TO TAKE ON OTHER PROJECTS, AND SO IT GOES. BUT WHEN IT COMES TO THIS NEXT UNFINISHED SYMPHONY OF SOPHISTICATION, NO ONE'S QUITE SURE WHY IT DIDN'T HAPPEN. BACK IN THE SIXTIES, STAN LEE AND JOHN ROMITA SR. PRODUCED TWO MAGAZINE-SIZED SPIDER-MAN SPECTACULARS THAT TODAY ARE STILL ON THE MOST FINICKY OF FANS' MUST-HAVE LISTS.

BUT WHAT MANY DO NOT REALIZE IS THAT A THIRD ISSUE WAS IN THE WORKS AT ONE POINT... A THIRD ISSUE OF PETER PARKER, THE SENSATIONAL SPIDER-MAN WAS IN THE PROCESS OF PRODUCTION. AND, OF COURSE, THIS BRINGS US TO THE GREATEST COMICS NEVER SEEN.

PETER PARKER, THE SENSATIONAL SPIDER-MAN #3, UNLIKE THE PREVIOUS TWO EDITIONS, WAS TO FEATURE THE PENCILS (PULSE-POUNDIN', OF COURSE) OF MARIE SEVERIN. JOHN ROMITA SR. WAS SLATED TO DO THE INKING AND, OF COURSE, STAN "THE MAN" LEE WAS THE SCRIBE. THIS PROJECT, THOUGH, WAS BEGUN, NOT IN THE '60S, BUT THE '80S. PETER PARKER AND MARY JANE ARE TOGETHER, WHETHER MARRIED OR NOT IS THE QUESTION. MARY JANE, THOUGH, OBVIOUSLY KNOWS THAT PETER PARKER IS SPIDER-MAN. THE STORY ITSELF BEGINS WITH A LONG FLASHBACK TO THE '60S. BUT SOMEHOW, ONLY 14 PAGES OF THIS STORY EXIST. JAZZY JOHNNY NEVER GOT THE OPPORTUNITY TO BEGIN INKING THEM, AND STAN WAS NEVER ABLE, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF A FEW PAGES, TO PEARL THESE PENCILS WITH HIS PROLIFICATIONS.

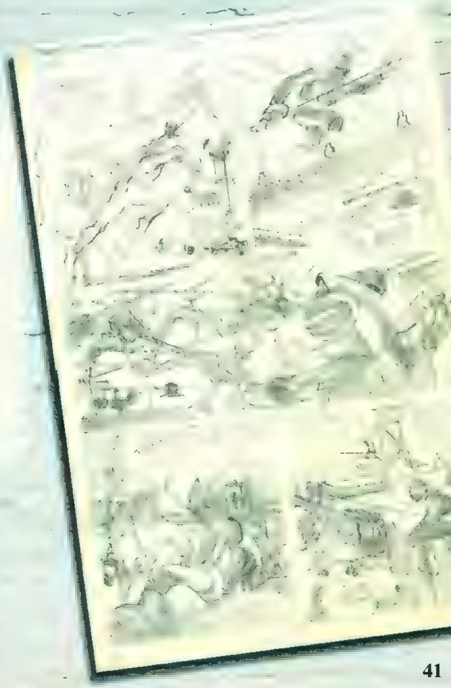
THE STORY BEGINS WITH SPIDER-MAN SWINGING BY A BILLBOARD THAT ADVERTISED A RERUN OF "THE MURDER OF DALTON DRAKE." THIS RERUN SUGGESTS THAT THIS PROGRAM WAS SPIDER-MAN'S FIRST TELEVISION APPEARANCE AND ALSO SUGGESTS THAT SPIDER-MAN WAS CAUGHT IN THE ACT OF KILLING THIS TELEVISION PERSONALITY. THIS LEADS TO A FLASHBACK (BACK TO AROUND THE PERIOD OF AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #50) OF SPIDER-MAN SAVING DALTON DRAKE FROM A VILLAIN KNOWN AS THE STALKER. AFTER HIS LIFE WAS SAVED FROM THIS NEW VILLAIN, DRAKE INVITES SPIDER-MAN TO BE A GUEST ON HIS TELEVISION TALK SHOW. EVEN WHEN DRAKE OFFERS $1000 AS PAYMENT FOR SAID INTERVIEW, SPIDER-MAN DECLINES.

IN TIME, THOUGH, AFTER FACING ANOTHER LOAD OF BILLS, AND IGNORING HIS SPIDER-SENSE WARNING OF IMPENDING DOOM, SPIDER-MAN AGREES TO DO THE INTERVIEW. AND, OF COURSE, AT THE TAPING OF THIS TELEVISION SHOW (WHERE MARY JANE, OF COURSE, IS TRYING TO DRAW ATTENTION TO HERSELF), THE STALKER ATTACKS AGAIN.

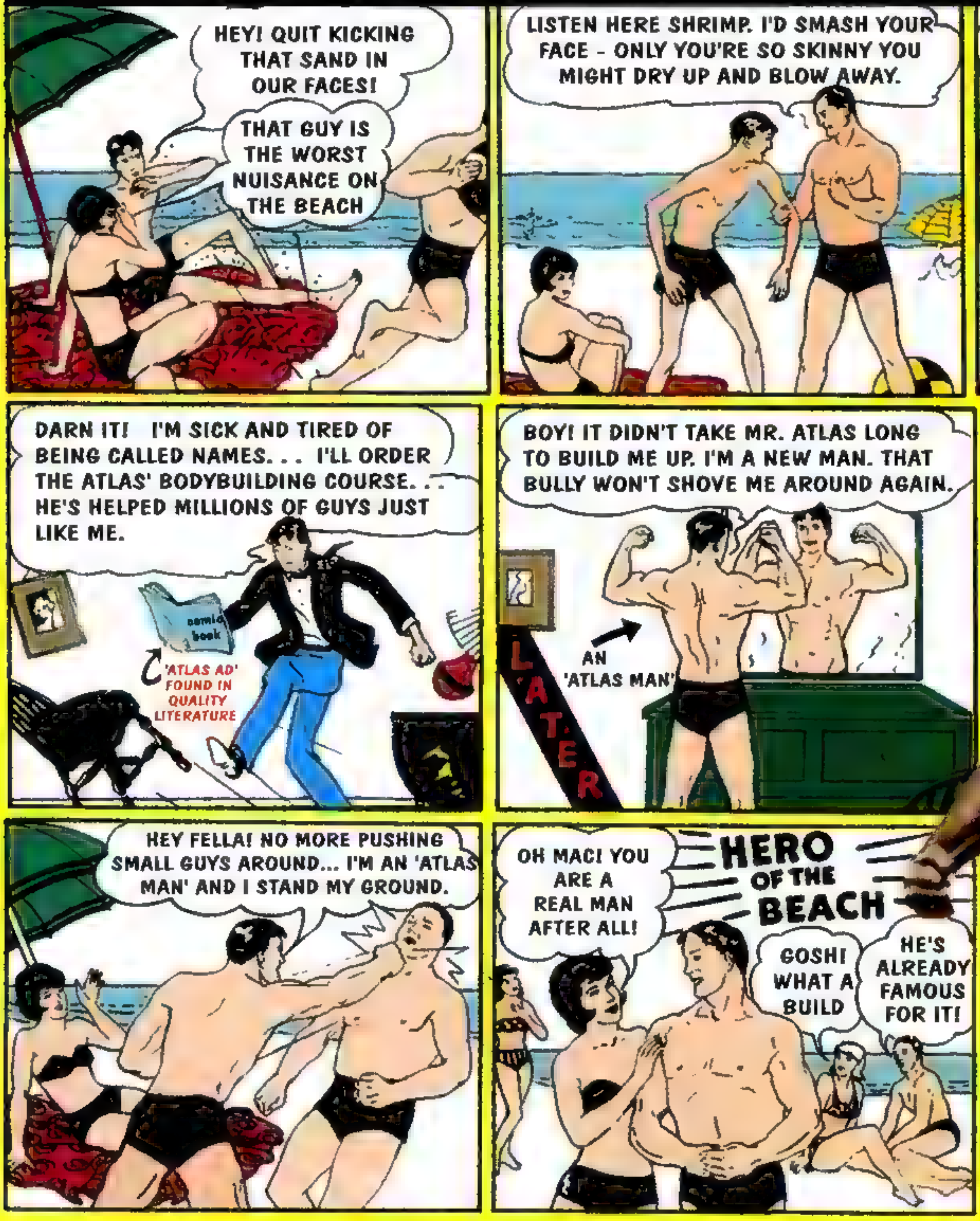
AND THAT'S ALL THERE IS. THE STALKER ATTACKS ON PG. 14. THAT'S THE LAST PAGE. SO THE QUESTIONS REMAIN. HOW IS IT THAT SPIDER-MAN SEEMED TO BE BLAMED FOR THE DEATH OF DALTON DRAKE? WHO WAS THE STALKER AND WHY DID HE HATE DALTON DRAKE TO SUCH A DEGREE? AND, WELL, DID SPIDEY EVER GET HIS THOUSAND BUCKS? CHANCES ARE HE DIDN'T... BUT IT'S ALL OPEN TO THE SPECTACULAR SPECULATIONS OF YOU, THE FANS.

THE ONLY CLUE MAY BE THE LINE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE ISSUE THAT READ, "WE DON'T CARE HOW MANY SPIDEY SAGAS YOU'VE SAVORED BEFORE! AFTER FINISHING THIS, YOU'LL REALIZE WHY WE CALL IT THE MOST OFFBEAT ONE OF ALL! GO AHEAD..."SEE IF WE'RE EXAGGERATING."

THE CONCLUSION, IT SEEMS, WILL BE LOST FOR ALL TIME IN THE ANNALS OF THE ***GREATEST COMICS NEVER SEEN.***



TIRED OF BEING PICKED ON? NOBODY PICKS ON AN "ATLAS MAN!"



I WAS PICKED ON TOO - NOT ANYMORE!

That's right fellas, I understand how it feels to be **"picked on."** I was a skinny "97-pound weakling." I was so ashamed of my scrawny body that I dreaded being seen in a swim suit or going to the gym. The girls wouldn't look at me and the guys gave me no respect. That all changed for me, and I'll change it for you. I'll make you an **"Atlas Man."** I will build you a massive muscular body to impress the girls and stop the bullies! **You have my word on that!**

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The Surgeon General has determined that lack of physical exercise is detrimental to your health.

Spinning Webs

WITH RALPH MACCHIO

By Dean Davis

For my latest assignment Tim suggested that I do an interview with Ralph Macchio. I was like, "Aw, man...Ralph Macchio! I love his work!" I made arrangements to do the actual interview with Ralph at the Marvel offices. By the time I got on the train I knew this guy's career inside and out!

Upon arriving at 387 Park Avenue South I went up to Tim's office and hung out a bit. Ralph had some time for the interview so Tim showed me where to go. We walked down a hallway away from the Bullpen; the first thing I noticed were the large fake spiderwebs in the doorway along with pictures and posters of everyone's favorite wallcrawler. I was introduced to Ralph and the whole time I was thinking, "This guy really looks different from the pictures I saw when I researched him." I then started my questions...

DD: The first thing I've got to ask you is, was it hard trying to do those kicks while balancing on one leg on that wooden pole?
RM: Excuse me...?

DD: Is Pat Morita pretty cool like Arnold on "Happy Days" or is he stuck up?
RM: I'm sorry, I don't think I understand you...

DD: Did you really catch that fly with those chopsticks?
RM: Huh?

DD: Okay, here's an easy one...When you were on "Eight is Enough" did you ever date any of the girls in the cast? You had a good crop to choose from.

RM: What in the world are you possibly talking about?

DD: Aren't you Ralph Macchio?
RM: Hmm...the answer I have to go with is 'yes'.

DD: Weren't you Daniel-san in "The Karate Kid"? You know, "Wax on...wax off."
RM: I'm terribly sorry, but you have me confused with Ralph Macchio.
DD: And the difference is?

RM: Ralph Macchio is an actor and pronounces his name with a soft "c-h" like macho man. I'm Ralph Macchio, the editor on the Spider-Man books and I pronounce my name with a hard "c-h" like the Mach 5.

DD: Oh...I see. (sweat is now beading off me like Charlie Brown on the mound)
RM: Are you all right? You look a little pale.

DD: I don't know what's going to kill me first, the embarrassment of this mistake or that hotdog I bought on the street.
RM: Eeeww, you didn't buy it from the guy who keeps digging at his ear with the same tongs he uses to get your food, did you?

DD: Uh...I'll be right back.
I ran to Tim's office and scrambled a quick list of questions together while simultaneously hitting my forehead and repeating, "Stupid, stupid, stupid!". A few minutes later I was back in Ralph's office with an excuse that the hotdog I ate gave me a case of delirium. Since I almost blew chow on his desk earlier, I think he bought it.

DD: Your whole career has been at Marvel. How long have you been here?
RM: Since 1976, I believe it was April. I had written a lot of letters to Don McGregor who did the BLACK PANTHER and KILLRAVEN series. I ran into him at a convention and he remembered me. He said, "I want to take you around and have you meet some people." He introduced me to everyone he knew in comics.

After that initial meeting he later took me up to Marvel Comics where I met people like Steve Gerber and Chris Claremont. Chris too had remembered me from letters I wrote to him. He

said, "How would you like to interview Roy Thomas for F.O.O.M.?", which was a fan magazine Marvel had back then. It was a '70s version of VISION. I told him I'd love to do the interview. I was in college at the time and it was a chance to get me into Marvel.

Every Friday I would come up and Roy really wouldn't be able to spare the time for the interview. I'd just hang around and meet all kinds of people in the office. Eventually I did get to interview Roy, but I had also gotten very friendly with John Warner who at that time was an assistant on Marvel's black and white magazine line. He then was promoted to editor of the black and whites and I became his assistant. I've just been here ever since.

DD: As we all know, you became an editor yourself. You've probably in one form or another been associated with most of the major Marvel characters.
RM: Not every one. I haven't edited Iron Man, Hulk, or any of the X-Men books.

DD: Okay, let me rephrase that by saying many of the characters Stan Lee and Jack Kirby created.
RM: Yeah, I guess so. It's been very gratifying to be a part of those titles.

DD: One of my favorites has always been Daredevil. Let's talk about Hornhead.
RM: We had a good run on Daredevil. I think I had the longest stint on that title as editor...about ten years or so. It was great for me particularly because I saw a group of writers and artists really develop their talent on that book. People like Frank Miller, David Mazuchelli,

John Romita Jr., Ann Nocenti, Dan Chichester and Lee Weeks. Everybody that worked on that book really did something special. I was very pleased with the whole experience.
DD: Most of those creative teams you just mentioned meshed together so perfectly. Is it hard for an editor to try and pair up those combinations?
RM: Well, you really have to try it and hope that there's going to be some chemistry there. I was lucky on Daredevil because it worked so well. When Frank Miller returned to Daredevil to do "Born Again" he really didn't know about David Mazuchelli's work. Frank wanted to do the full script and David was thrilled at the opportunity to work with Frank. I also arranged for Frank to work with Bill Sienkiewicz and John Romita Jr. as well.

DD: Let's leave Daredevil and travel across town to another Marvel mainstay. Are you presently happy with the way Spider-Man's life is going?
RM: I like the way Spidey is running now because I think it gives a bit more creative freedom to the teams. They don't have to worry about one thing occurring in another book that they have to touch upon in their books. The variety of stories we can get throughout the titles, to me, is a more interesting read. I like the fact that we can do a gritty, realistic crime story with no super-villains in one title and do something more fun and not as intense in another. Spider-Man is such a great concept, and he has such a great cast of characters, that he can be read either way. Now, we will begin to tie the books a little more tightly for special events, but then they'll go back to being their own titles.

DD: What's the next red circle date on Peter and MJ's calendar?

RM: What we are doing in the books shipping in January is a four-part story that does run through each of the titles called the "SpiderHunt." It's going to deal in a very strong and intense way with Spider-Man being accused of murder. We're setting up this premise in the books now. Eventually he'll find every bounty hunter, law official, and super hero is out to get him. He really just can no longer be Spider-Man. He has to do something for his own safety while still dealing with his responsibilities as a crimefighter.

He accomplishes this by assuming four separate identities. The writers and the artists will have the opportunity to design these new characters. Each one will be Peter Parker. He's not living these identities because he's crazy, he assumes them because he can complete what he needs to do better as four separate guys. So Spider-Man will disappear and these four new heroes, all Peter Parker, will be introduced.
DD: Quickly going back to Daredevil, won't he know these four new guys are all really Peter? New clothes, new names, same heartbeat?
RM: Yes, we're trying to make that (knowledge) less as time goes by. (laughter) See, Peter Parker can't hide anything from Daredevil because of his heightened senses. But, by the time of this story, Venom will not know, Doc Ock won't know Peter's Spidey...We're trying to go around the Marvel Universe and see that the characters who know for one reason or another now will not in the future.

DD: You're also the editor on some of Marvel's new horror titles. What directions are you taking with this genre? (Shameless Plug Dept.: For those of you interested in the history of Marvel's horror characters, check out the three-parter in VISION #17-19.)
RM: We have writers Marc DeMatteis on MAN-THING and Paul Jenkins on WEREWOLF BY NIGHT. These books will not be "Vertigoesque". They will be hardcore horror books. This is horror without any of the pretensions. There's going to be nothing flowery about this, nothing that covers it up...it's just going to be "grab you by the seat of your pants" horror. The stories of course will have subtleties in them, the themes will be of an adult nature, and we will just absolutely terrify you.

It was at this time that Ralph's assistant, Matt Hicks, made him aware of a pressing lunch engagement. Realizing this would be my last chance to save face as a writer, I blurted out my toughest, hardest hitting question!
DD: Uh...is there anything else you'd like to say?
RM: All I can think of is that during the next six months or so it's going to be a crucial period for the company and the industry. Maybe even a critical time too as we try to figure out where the whole business is going to go. Some of the things I'm saying now might not be operative in the coming weeks. I think the people reading this interview a couple months from now might be viewing a very different comic book world.....possibly.

I thanked Ralph for his time and profusely apologized for the Karate Kid mix-up. He said it was cool and showed me what he knew of the martial arts by executing a perfect snap kick to my...well, let's just say my boxer shorts now know Ralph's shoe size.

—Dean Davis (Who does all future interviews by *phone!*)

A Look At Marvel's Western Heroes

I've got to admit, I'm a sucker for the westerns. They're the titles that have occupied the most space in my collection since I was a "wee one". I mainly started purchasing them out of the necessity of reading a complete story. Let me explain...back in the early '70s most kids bought their comics from the corner drugstore or the local five and dime. Comic shops in the suburbs weren't even conceived yet. Unfortunately the store where I shopped didn't always get the same titles every month. If I started a Thor story from the beginning, chances were Hammerboy wouldn't make the rack (or would sell out) with next month's order. The westerns contained stand-alone stories that featured the title's main character and also gave you one or two back-up tales. After grasping the concept of a shipping schedule I moved over to the super heroes, but the westerns were still in my pile as I moseyed on up to the cash register.

The Code of the West

We're all aware that during the early '50s the Comics Code Authority was created. The super heroes were already in decline since the end of the Second World War and the Code took its toll on most of the horror and crime comics. Due to their downplaying of violence and high moral standards the westerns were seen as good wholesome fun. Their popularity and sales either increased or stayed steady in that roller coaster market. It also didn't hurt that practically one out of every four shows on those new fangled televisions was a western.

The stories that Marvel created for the cowpokes could be seen more as fables. A bad guy would terrorize a town until a good guy would show up and put an end to the whole mess. Firearms would only be used by the hero for defense or a last resort. In the end, sometimes through a surprise ending, the reader always found a good piece of advice or a moral. Things were seen as black and white. You either obeyed the law or you didn't. "There t'weren't no in between when it came to the law," a cowboy would say.

Stan Lee Has Over Ten Kids!

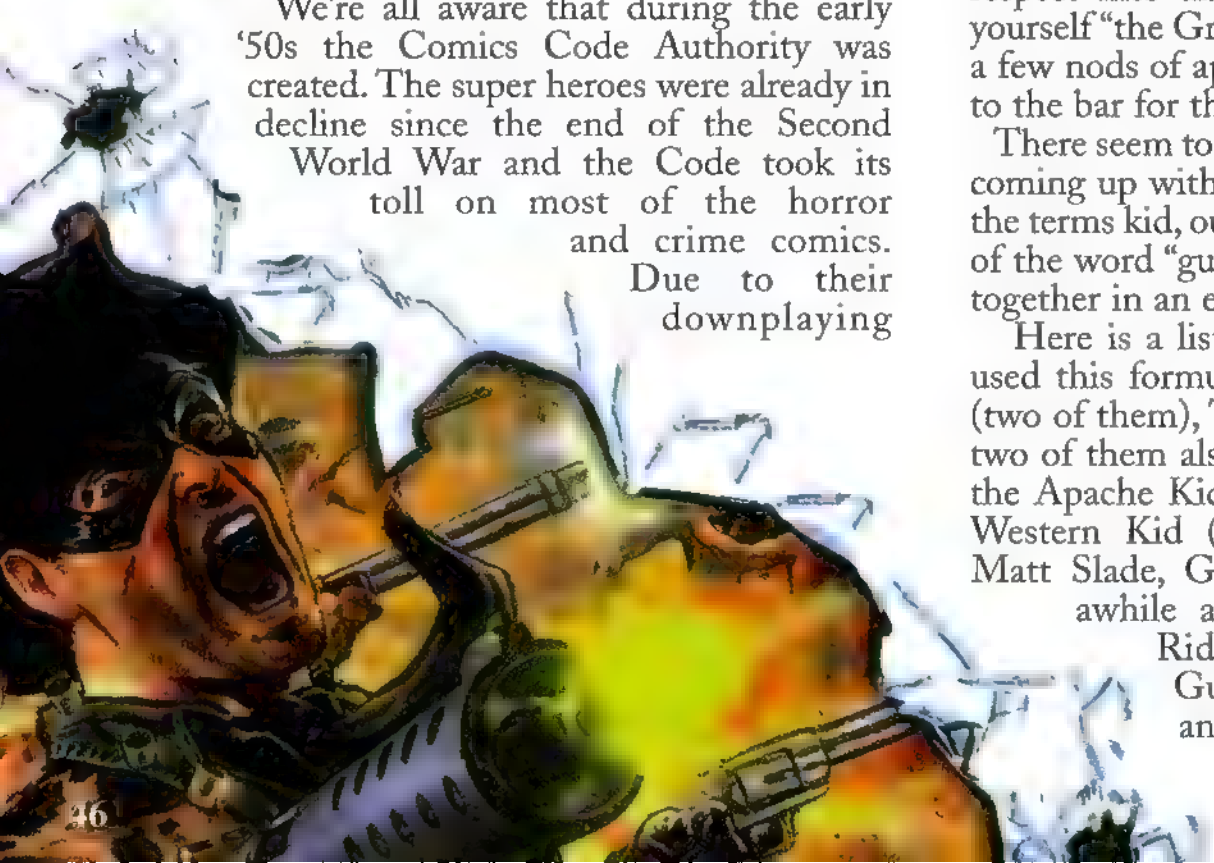
No, you're not reading a gossip piece in the National Enquirer. When we look at the western characters created by Stan and the Bullpen, we find more than ten have the word "kid" in their nicknames. Some only hung around for a six page back-up story while others had their own titles which saw some form of print for thirty years or more.

To be a successful hero in the frontier it was best to have a cool name tagged on you. Something like Fred Finklebaum wasn't going to send terror and respect into an outlaw's heart. But, if you called yourself "the Granite Kid," it would certainly get you a few nods of approval as you clanged your spurs up to the bar for that tall glass of milk.

There seem to be four elements that never fail when coming up with your cowboy nickname. Always use the terms kid, outlaw, rider, or incorporate some form of the word "gun". You can use them individually or together in an endless amount of combinations.

Here is a list of Marvel's prairie dogs who have used this formula: Kid Colt Outlaw, Rawhide Kid (two of them), Two-Gun Kid (ironically, there were two of them also), the Ringo Kid, the Outlaw Kid, the Apache Kid, the Black Rider, Kid Cassidy, the Western Kid (a.k.a. Tex Dawson, Gun-Slinger), Matt Slade, Gunfighter (who was Kid Slade for awhile and then changed it back), Ghost Rider (later Night Rider), the Gunhawks, Kid Barrat, the Rio Kid, and the Phoenix Kid.

Most of the adversaries the



western hero met were just plain old hombres who let their six-shooters do most of the talking. They did occasionally run into the always menacing super-villain. These guys liked to get their names from a color wheel, the animal kingdom, and couldn't seem to avoid the word "the". Let's see, we had: the Red Raven, the Ape, the Purple Phantom, the Barracuda, the Iron Mask, the Grizzly, the Scorpion, the Rattler, the Masked Maverick, the Cougar, the Tarantula, the Bat, and the Circus of Crime. Now Red Wolf either missed the club meeting about naming yourself or read the wrong criteria list. Even though he has a color and an animal in his monicker, he is most definitely a good guy.

While we're on the subject of names, let's examine a group who had some of the most appropriate...the horses. They did seem to harp on the weather a bit though. Real quick we had: Cyclone, Steel, Arab, Satan, Thunder, Whirlwind, Nightwind, and Lightning (who was really a dog). I'll leave it up to you to find out which horse went with which rider.

Those Lone Riders of the Range

The first Marvel/Atlas western appeared in

1948; it was The Two-Gun Kid. After years of unexplained absence, a grown Clay Harder rides up to his father's ranch. The poor guy gets to see his dad for about fifteen seconds before witnessing the old man's death from the bullet of a rival rancher. He brings the killer to justice and sells the ranch. This Two-Gun Kid is quite different from the later version who wore a mask. For one thing, he sang. You could tell when he'd kick into a tune because his word balloon was full of musical notes. The first two lines were always the same:

I ride alone thruout the west, (that is the way they spelled "throughout")

From Dodge to Alamo,

He would then finish off the jingle by recapping the story you just finished:

When muh money's gone,

I can go right on,

And join the ro-dee-o!!

The hardest part for the writers didn't seem to be coming up with a good story, but instead, trying to find words for the closing song that rhymed with Alamo.

The more familiar Two-Gun Kid was really frontier lawyer Matt Hawk who kept the streets of Tombstone, Arizona clean. He was one of the few western heroes to have a secret identity. Nobody ever guessed that the masked keeper of justice was really the weak and frail Boston lawyer. Since most of his adventures took place in Tombstone, Two-Gun had a strong cast of regular supporting characters.

Blaine Colt was born with the natural ability to draw a gun faster than anyone. Because of this speed he was afraid to wear a gun as he thought everyone would want to challenge him. After his father is killed on their ranch by the town bully, Blaine avenges his death. He skips town rather than stand trial because he feels no one will believe he outdrew his father's killer. Now wouldn't logic have been to go in front of the judge and say, "Your honor, I did it in self-defense and look at how fast I can draw." Case dismissed. When he wasn't helping the downtrodden, Colt spent the rest of his time hiding from a tin star (sheriff). Kid Colt Outlaw was the first title to carry the current Marvel identification after the company's name-change from Atlas.

The original Rawhide Kid debuted in 1955. He was a retired gunslinger who hung up his six-shooter and bullwhip to become a rancher in Shotgun City. Rawhide's sidekick was Kid Randy, who obviously followed the rules we discussed earlier about choosing your cowboy nickname. Randy helped his mentor keep the peace in the lawless town.

The later version of the Rawhide Kid was the most popular of the western characters. His real name is John Clay although he usually went by John Bart. This surname came from Ben Bart, the man who adopted John after his parents were killed by Indians. Ben was a former Texas Ranger and taught John how to handle a firearm. The youngster was left-handed and he was taught to become ambidextrous by his expert teacher. Ben was later killed in an unfair gunfight and John avenged his death. Afterwards he was involved in another gunfight and killed a man in self-defense. Suffering from "Kid Colt Syndrome" John took the name Rawhide Kid and split rather than stand trial. One of the things that made Rawhide "the man" was the way he dressed. His dark blue outfit was much more in

vogue than what the other tobaccy-chewers were sportin' in those days.

Now, you just read three origin stories that seemed to sound amazingly similar. But, if you look closely, you will see the subtle differences. The first Two-Gun Kid shot the man who killed his rancher father and was found not guilty. Kid Colt shot the man who killed his rancher father and ran before he could prove his innocence. The Rawhide Kid was a combination of the two. He shot the man who killed his adopted father and was found not guilty. He then killed another in self-defense and ran like a rabbit. Is everybody clear on this? Good...let's move on. Instead of sounding redundant with the rest of the origins, we'll just mention a few things about the remaining members of the posse.

The Ringo Kid had a haircut and sideburns that would make Elvis jealous. The Western Kid wore a bright yellow outfit and was drawn by John Romita. One of the best western comic artists, Doug Wildey, handled the Outlaw Kid beautifully. He was a dual identity hero and a recognized good guy like the second Two-Gun Kid, but for some reason used the name "Outlaw". Ghost Rider was probably the most "super hero-ish" of the western heroes. He specialized in "mystical illusions" and wore an all-white outfit. After the debut of Johnny Blaze as the motorcycle-riding Ghost Rider in MARVEL SPOTLIGHT, the horse-riding version had his named changed to Night Rider. Marvel did originally offer the job to the cowboy, but he didn't know what a motorcycle was and he wasn't too keen about setting his head on fire.

The "O" Word

The Marvel western comic seemed to have a language all its own. Much of it was derived from any cowboy movie. There was one phrase, though, that could be interpreted a number of ways. If this label fell on you it meant you could be anything from a stranger in town to a mistrustful, cowardly killer. That word was...owlhoot. I have never seen this expression uttered anywhere else but in a Marvel western. Many times "owlhoot" was yelled by an outlaw gang as they tried to ambush the main character. In the next panel our hero would call his attackers the same thing as he evaded the rain of bullets.

The Aim Game

After having bad experiences in killing guys in self-defense (like there's a good experience), most of Marvel's cowpokes opted for a unique way of winning a gunfight...they would shoot the guns out of their opponent's hands! Nine times out of ten this person was five yards or more away and was usually on horseback or running! The skill, training, and daily practice involved with this technique boggle the mind.

Now we've all thrown trashcan lids pretending we were Captain America (c'mon, like you're going to tell me you've never done it). I dare you to try "The Marvel Marksmanship Test". Here's what you do: 1) Tape a target on the blade of a ceiling fan; 2) Turn the fan on "turbo"; 3) Stand in the far corner of the room with a bag of rubber bands; 4) Close one eye and shoot the rubber bands at the target while jumping up and down. If you can hit the target thirty times in a row, call Tim; I think we can feature you in your own western title. In reality, this style of gunfighting was a reflection of the Comics Code.

Happy Trails!

We encourage you to seek out some of the western comics and give them a try. We think you'll be mildly surprised. Comic shops that have a wide back issue selection are probably the best place to start. Conventions are also a great way of finding the gunslingers. Always check the discount boxes. For those who can't live without their super heroes, check out AVENGERS #142 — you'll kill two birds with one stone. The best news is that most of the books you'll find (especially the '70s reprints) will probably be under two bucks! You can buy a decent amount of westerns and still have money for the new books. After you read them, send us your thoughts here at VISION. We're interested in your opinion. If some smart-alecky shop owner tells you, "Nobody reads the westerns anymore," you can look him straight in the eye and say, "I do, you owlhoot!"

Dean Davis
(Who Tim suspects is the culprit that keeps writing "Bring back the Rawhide Kid!" on the mens room wall.)

NEXT: The Punisher goes West!

IF DUSK IS REALLY SPIDER-MAN,
THEN WHO'S PRODIGY?
Peter Parker, Spider-Man #92-93
Howard Mackie • John Romita Jr. • Scott Hanna
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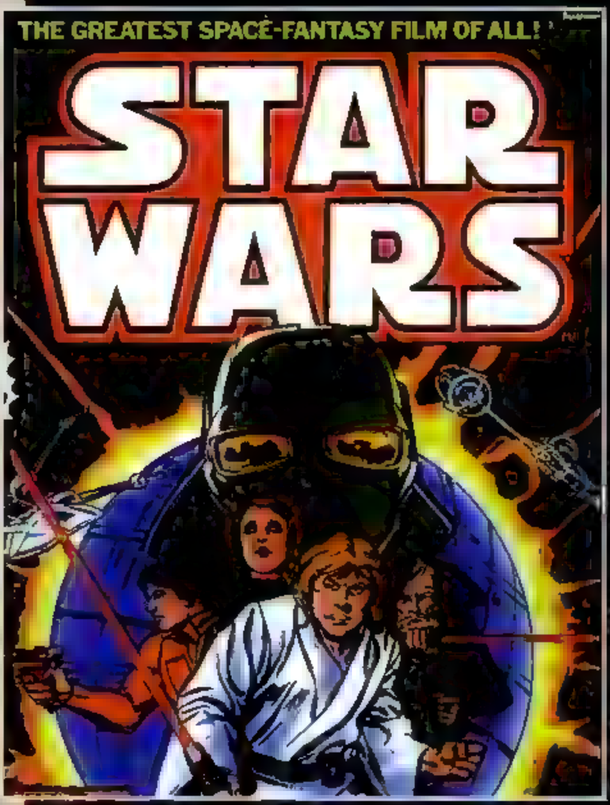
1977

PART 1:



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THE FORCE IS WITH MARVEL

Imagine yourself back twenty-one years ago. Jimmy Carter was president. Disco music had reached its peak. And moviegoers did not expect the summer to be filled with blockbuster action-adventure movies. (Oh, sure, there was that Jaws movie two years back, but that was regarded as an anomaly.) People didn't go to westerns or war movies or detective thrillers any more, and except for James Bond, the spy movie was dead. And the Conventional Wisdom, as everybody knew, was that science fiction movies don't make big money. They only attracted a small niche audience, and that was why they had mostly been poorly done, low budget B-movies since the 1950s. (Oh, yeah, there was that 2001 thing back in the 1960s. But that was an anomaly.)

Moreover, the Conventional Wisdom, as everybody in the comics industry knew, was that science fiction comics don't make money. (Oh, of course, there were those EC comics in the 1950s. But they were anomalies.)

So what a surprise it was when in the spring of 1977 Marvel launched this new science fiction series based on this movie that hadn't even come out yet, called Star Wars. It seemed that its director and writer, George Lucas, had gotten together with Marvel writer/editor Roy Thomas and persuaded him that this would be a really good movie and would make a really good comic book as well. So Roy managed to persuade the Powers That Be at Marvel to take a chance on this untested property practically no one else had heard of, and as a result Marvel did a six-part adaptation of the movie. Roy wrote the series, and the pencils were by future star artist Howard Chaykin, then at the beginning of his career. The first few issues came out before the movie did, and probably a good number of Marvel fans read them and thought, hmm, you know, this is pretty good. I know I liked them enough to make sure I went to the movie on opening day.

And, of course, you all know what happened to "Star Wars" the movie from then on. Everybody had to change their Conventional Wisdom about science fiction movies really fast.

The tremendous success of the movie meant that Marvel continued doing the STAR WARS comic after the six-part adaptation of the movie came to an end. Perceptively, Roy Thomas realized how George Lucas blended elements from old movies and even from Japanese culture into his Star Wars mythos. So the first original story arc for the Star Wars comic was a variation on the Japanese director Akira Kurosawa's The Seven Samurai, which had later been remade as the western The Magnificent Seven. Perhaps knowing of Lucas's affection for the work of animation director Chuck Jones, Roy even put a talking rabbit-like alien reminiscent of Bugs Bunny in the story. It is said that the Lucasfilm people did not care much for this storyline, however.

In any event, Roy Thomas soon left the series, being busy as the sole writer of Marvel's various CONAN projects as well as THE INVADERS, as did Howard Chaykin But, proving that science fiction comics could indeed be big sellers, Marvel kept on publishing STAR WARS comics through the rest of the 1970s and well into the 1980s. Perhaps the most memorable of these were the special adaptations of The Empire Strikes Back and Return of the Jedi, written by Archie Goodwin and illustrated by Al Williamson, who had first come to fame drawing science fiction stories for EC. (See? They weren't such an exception, after all.)

The STAR WARS comic points to one of Marvel's shining virtues in the 1970s. There are those who think of the 1970s as a low point for Marvel. Certainly it would be difficult to equal the genuine greatness of the work of Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko, and the rest in the 1960s that still stands as the artistic foundation of Marvel and, indirectly, of all American action-adventure comics that followed. And it is likewise true that a number of Marvel's core series went through a period of creative doldrums through much of the 1970s. But the Marvel of the 1970s was full of young talented people who were bursting with creative energy and eager to push the comics artform, as Stan and Jack and the others had redefined it, into new directions. STAR WARS the comic was a gamble by Roy Thomas and by Marvel that paid off handsomely, artistically and financially, just as CONAN had earlier in the decade. Marvel was the cutting edge, getting in on the ground floor of major popular culture phenomena.

And speaking of experimentation in comics, what, you ask, became of last month's

cliffhanger regarding that truly unique Marvel series, Stevbe Gerber's HOWARD THE DUCK? You may recall that the All-Night Party had persuaded H. T. D. to run for the presidency against Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford in 1976. But then in issue #8 (published in 1976 but cover-dated January 1977) a disgruntled bellboy took a photograph of Howard and his human girlfriend and campaign worker Beverly Switzler taking a bubble bath together. The scandal and public outrage sunk Howard's candidacy overnight. (Hmm, looks like presidential politics hasn't changed much in the intervening twenty-two years.)

In real life such a political disaster leads to theories that there was some conspiracy behind it. And in the world of comics, there really is a conspiracy! In issue #9 Howard tracked the conspiracy all the way to Canada where he confronted the mastermind behind it all: a crazed French Canadian separatist! (Yes, folks, back then the separatist movement in Quebec could be treated as a joke. And what this has to do with Howard's candidacy is inexplicable, but the absurdity of it all was Gerber's point.) Just as the United States makes the bald eagle its national symbol, so too this proud French Canadian chose one of Canada's noblest creatures for his emblem. And so he dressed up as a giant beaver, complete with big buck teeth, and called himself (what else) Le Beaver. (I suppose we should be grateful that when Roy Thomas and Len Wein decided to create a Canadian hero they chose a wolverine instead.) Holding Beverly hostage, Le Beaver demanded that Howard cross a log spanning the falls to fight him man-to-man (or duck-to-rodent, I suppose). In keeping with Gerber's attacks on violence in the series, Howard refused to play his enemy's game, and, blinded by fury, Le Beaver toppled into the falls himself. (Even more amazingly, no one has ever been tempted to bring him back! Here's one Marvel villain who has stayed dead—so far.)

Beverly was safe, but Howard was haunted by guilt over whether he had acted recklessly in defying Le Beaver. And so the next issue consisted entirely of Howard's dream, in which he confronted his inner demons in a surreal psychodrama. Before Howard came to terms with his problems, he even wound up in an insane asylum, where he briefly encountered, of all people, the rock group KISS, in a strange crossover with the KISS comic Gerber wrote for Marvel that same year!

But Howard still had not hit bottom. He did have a break from his downward spiral, as he and Beverly were spirited off to the mock-Arabian Nights kingdom of Bagmom (as opposed to Baghdad, you see) in that year's HTD ANNUAL. But while enjoying a cruise back to America on the S. S. Damned (making it the Voyage of the. . .well, you can figure it out), they were abducted by the man who would prove to be to Howard what Doctor Doom is to the Fantastic Four. Yes, issue #15 saw the introduction of that diabolical genetic engineer, that mad master of sonics, and former college nerd turned rock critic—the dreaded Doctor Bong. Whereas Doctor Doom wore a forbidding iron mask, Doctor Bong wore a giant bell on his head, and by striking it with the clapper he wore in place of one of his hands, he could create all sorts of sonic effects. (When he hit the bell on his head, it made a loud "BONG!" sound. Hence the name.)

Enamored since his formative nerd years of the beautiful Beverly, Doctor Bong was determined to take her from Howard. So he subjected HTD to a fate worse than death: he used genetic engineering to turn him into a human being, or, as Howard would say, a hairless ape. (And, I have to say, it was interesting to see what artist Gene Colan thought Howard would look like as a human.) Now, really, despite the absurdity of it all, this really did work as an affecting dark night of the soul for Howard; being deprived of his duckness was tantamount to losing his sense of self.

Meanwhile, no more than a small core of readers back in 1977 had the good taste to appreciate the work of the team that was about to change the face of super hero comics: Chris Claremont and John Byrne, working together on IRON FIST. Unfortunately, the book did not have enough readers to keep it going. So the majority of Marvel readers were not paying attention when in issue #14 Claremont and Byrne introduced a savage new Canadian villain who bore a strange—and intentional—resemblance to Wolverine and who went by the name Sabretooth. Byrne intended for Sabretooth to be Wolverine's father, but later writers had other ideas.

IRON FIST came to an end only one issue later, in #15, in which Iron Fist met, and in the time-honored

Marvel tradition, fought Wolverine before proper introductions were made. And so the series ended with a big party whose guests included Iron Fist, the "new" X-Men, and even Chris Claremont, John Byrne, and then presiding X-MEN artist Dave Cockrum, who all looked strangely alike back then: blond and bearded. This little gathering had a symbolic significance, as you shall see by the end of this installment.

As for Iron Fist, for three months he joined forces with the star of another book that could use sales help, and so Luke Cage's book became POWER MAN AND IRON FIST. Claremont and Byrne

did the first issue together, but each would soon leave the series: by now they were very busy elsewhere. But the POWER/FIST book, as it was nicknamed, continued for years, and has recently been revived as Marvel's new HEROES FOR HIRE series.

But now let us turn to another cliffhanger left over from our 1976 installments, namely the one in the newly revived X-MEN series, written by Claremont and drawn by Cockrum, but still only a bimonthly. (That's right, 1990s readers, back then many less popular titles only came out every two months, and back then THE X-MEN wasn't the best seller it is today, although it was starting to build momentum.)

When we left the X-Men in 1976, they were being held captive by the Banshee's evil cousin, Black Tom Cassidy and his partner, their old foe the Juggernaut, at the Banshee's ancestral castle in Ireland, Cassidy Keep. This story arc, by the way, marked Black Tom's very first appearance. Aided by leprechauns—believe it or not—the X-Men turned the tables on Black Tom, who plunged from a tower into the sea below, seemingly to his death (but, as we know, the X-Men had no such luck!). Proving the depth of his friendship for Black Tom, the Juggernaut dove in after him!

In the following issue, number #104, readers saw Muir Isle, off the coast of Scotland, and Dr. Moira MacTaggert's Mutant Research Center there for the very first time. This was also the "new" X-Men's first confrontation with Magneto, who exhibited a ferocity and power he had never shown before. Claremont and Cockrum had clearly upgraded him in power and attitude for this new generation of X-Men.

Magneto was tearing Moira MacTaggert's facility apart: he was livid with rage, and with good reason. The last time we had seen him was in a story Len Wein wrote for THE DEFENDERS, in which Magneto's own creation, Alpha the Ultimate Mutant, rebelled against him. Alpha ended up turning Magneto into a helpless, bawling baby, a particularly humiliating fate. And now we learned that the X-Men's leader Professor Xavier had scooped him up and turned him over to Moira for babysitting at Muir Isle.

But how could Xavier or Moira have predicted the intervention of Davan Shakari, alias Eric the Red, the alien Shi'ar operative under orders to stop the X-Men before they could aid the renegade Shi'ar princess Lilandra? Lilandra was fleeing to Earth to escape her brother, the mad Shi'ar emperor D'Ken Neramani. Shakari had decided the best way to rid himself of the X-Men was to send the team's greatest enemy against them. Hence, Shakari had restored Magneto to adulthood, though making him younger than he had been before being turned into a baby. (That is why Magneto seems so young despite the fact that, as we later learned, he grew up in the 1940s.)

The ensuing battle was hardly a great victory for the new, still rather inexperienced team of X-Men: basically, they succeeded simply in avoiding being killed until Magneto decided to make his exit. None of them noticed that during the melee the cell of a being known as "Mutant X" had been damaged, enabling him to escape. This would prove in later issues to be Moira's son Proteus, yet another deadly opponent for the X-Men.

For several issues Professor Xavier had sensed Lilandra's approach in the form of nightmarish dreams about battles she fought in space against her pursuers. Finally, though, they came face to face on Earth, while Shakari had duped Firelord, a former herald of Galactus, into aiding him. Phoenix went into action against Firelord, and her ability to match his cosmic power demonstrated to the readers just how powerful Jean Grey had become. (Let me remind you that at the time, even though the readers, the X-Men, and even Claremont and Cockrum, believed that this Phoenix was a transformed Jean Grey, a founding member of the X-Men, it would be revealed years later that this was a sentient cosmic entity called the Phoenix Force that had duplicated Jean's physical form. No wonder she could hold off a herald of Galactus!)

In the midst of the fray Shakari captured Lilandra and plunged with her through a waiting stargate that, for all the X-Men knew, could have transported them anywhere in the universe. Phoenix declared that she could reopen the stargate, and the X-Men were bent on going through and rescuing the princess. (Looks as if Claremont and Lucas were coincidentally treading similar creative paths that year!) We were on the verge of the very first outer space epic adventure in

the history of the X-Men, old or new. And then there was a fill-in issue.

What's a fill-in, you new readers ask? Every so often back in the 70's and 80's, when the creative team could not finish the next issue of a book in time, Marvel would have to substitute an inventory story, often done by different creators, and almost always unconnected with the ongoing storylines.

The fill-in in issue #106, though, is particularly interesting from the vantage point of the 1990s. Plotted by Bill Mantlo and scripted by Claremont, it is a flashback to a recent struggle by the X-Men against a mysterious opponent who proves to be the evil side of Xavier's own personality, manifested in astral form. Mantlo even brought this evil version of Xavier back years later in the X-MEN/MICRONAUTS limited series, dubbing the astral villain "the Entity." Reading this description of the Entity, today's readers should immediately realize that this was the beginning of the menace called Onslaught! Whether or not Onslaught's creators consciously remembered the Entity stories I can not say; perhaps it is merely coincidence that writers two decades apart came up with similar ideas. But from a historical point of view, judging the stories alone and not the authors' intentions, it certainly seems as if the Entity was the creature that would one day turn into the even more powerful evil version of Xavier we know as Onslaught.

With issue #107 Claremont, Cockrum, and the regular storyline were back. Having traveled through the stargate, the X-Men found themselves on an alien world, confronted not only by D'Ken himself, with Lilandra his prisoner, but by D'Ken's elite squad of super-powered warriors, the Imperial Guard. It was in this issue that most of the familiar Imperial Guardsmen were introduced, notably Gladiator and Fang. The latter's costume Wolverine confiscated after his own was destroyed in the ensuing battle between the Guardsmen and X-Men. The Imperial Guard were in part a colossal in-joke, since most of them bore vague but noticeable resemblances to members of a certain futuristic super hero club Dave Cockrum had made his reputation drawing over at the Distinguished Competion.

The X-Men were considerably outnumbered by this veritable legion of opponents, but the cavalry came to the rescue in the surprising form of the Starjammers, a band of good-hearted space pirates, led by a human named Corsair, who seemed to be a latter-day version of Errol Flynn in a swashbuckling pirate movie from thec 1930s. We would not learn for another issue that Corsair, by what still seems an extraordinary coincidence, was actually Christopher Summers, the long-thought-dead father of Cyclops.

Together the X-Men and Starjammers overpower the Guardsmen. But it was too late: D'Ken played his trump card. His scheme was to unleash the power of the M'Kraan Crystal, an entity that somehow imprisoned an entire galaxy of super-heavy neutron stars. If the immense gravitational forces of the neutron galaxy were released, they would destroy the universe. As issue #108 ends the Crystal is activated by the alignment of nine "Death Stars" (Hey, wait—that sounds familiar!) and the entire universe momentarily blinks out of existence! If the Crystal is not stopped, the universe will come to a permanent end.

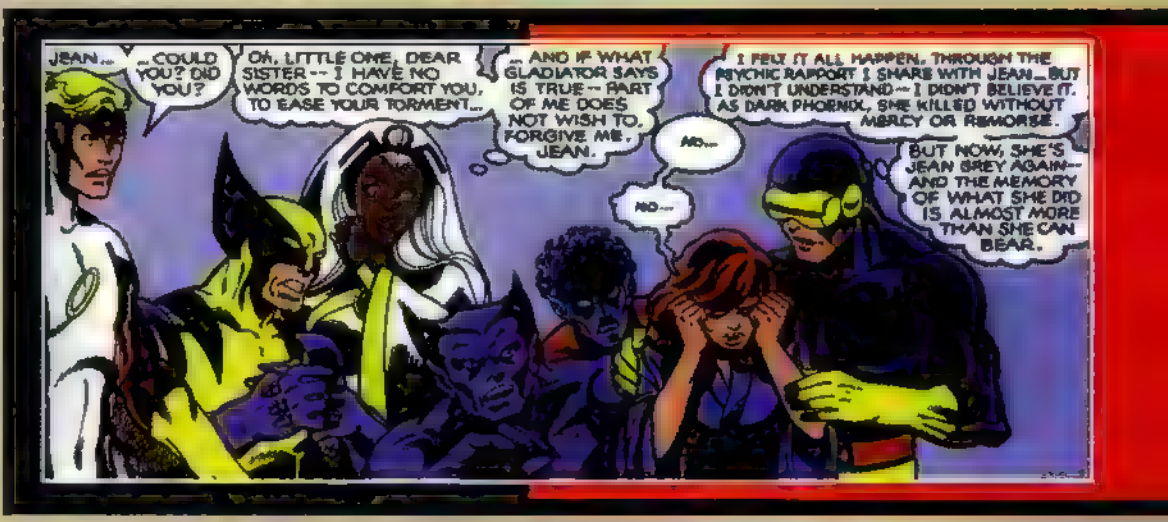
And at this climactic moment, Dave Cockrum leaves the series! Thanks to the book's growing success, Marvel wanted X-MEN to go monthly soon, and at that time Cockrum was not comfortable working on a monthly schedule. And so the penciling post on X-MEN was turned over to an artist who had already been collaborating with Claremont elsewhere, had already drawn the X-Men in the last issue of IRON FIST, and who really wanted the job. When the story resumed in issue #108, it was John Byrne who was drawing the series.

And the resolution was astounding, as Phoenix drew upon not only all of her own power but also upon Jean Grey's spiritual bonds with her fellow X-Men to rebuild the energy matrix within the Crystal, thereby re-imprisoning the neutron galaxy and the forces that threatened to destroy the cosmos. Phoenix had served as a force for life, saving the entire universe. Readers could hardly suspect that within a few years the balance would shift, and she would become Dark Phoenix, a force for universal destruction.

But that was still in the future. For now, happiness reigned. D'Ken was deposed, and the X-Men and Lilandra returned safely to Earth. While waiting for the Shi'ar government to judge her claims to the throne, Lilandra would have to remain on Earth, but this was hardly a problem, since she and Xavier were falling in love with each other.

And now that Chris Claremont and John Byrne were teamed up on the series, THE X-MEN was about to reach new heights. They would lay the groundwork that would make THE X-MEN the comic business's best-selling title and give rise to a whole family of Marvel mutant books. The Claremont-Byrne X-MEN would influence virtually every super hero team that followed, right up through the present day. Dividing modern comics history into separate periods is a difficult thing to do. But clearly the Claremont-Byrne X-MEN marked the beginning of something new: it would be the most influential run of a Marvel title since Stan Lee's classic work of the 1960s.

—Peter Sanderson



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- **THE HOOK:** One of the most popular members of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* stars in his own one-shot!
- **THE STORY:** Under very mysterious circumstances, **Commander William T. Riker** gets drummed out of Starfleet! Left with nowhere to turn, Riker searches for a purpose in his new life and finds meaning in the arms of a Maquis known as **Ro Laren**. Joining Ro and her Maquis companions on a quest for vital data regarding a dreadful weapon, Riker participates in a raid on Starfleet Central Library! Branded a criminal and on the run, how can Riker possibly clear his name—especially if one of his allies, a Klingon named **K'Nera**, has other mysterious plans for him?
- **THE CREATORS:** Written by the team of **Dan Abnett** and **Ian Edginton** (STAR TREK: EARLY VOYAGES), with a futuristic look supplied by **Andrew Currie** and **Art Nichols**, the art team behind SEEKER 3000.
- **THE FORMAT:** This 48-page one-shot features a **photo cover of Jonathan Frakes** with art by Andrew Currie and Art Nichols. *3.50*

ON SALE MAY 27

CONAN: RIVER OF BLOOD NO. 2 (OF 3)
COVER BY CLAUDIO CASTELLINI/ROLAND GREEN/GEOF ISHERWOOD
War ignites between the Go'Hengi and M'Ruki tribes of the Black Kingdoms—with **Conan** and **Valeria** caught in the middle! And when **Enduin** (the sorcerer with the ability to control crocodiles) is killed in battle, Conan is left with the power to command the sharp-toothed beasts! Now the mighty barbarian and his dangerous female companion must protect the peaceful Go'Hengi before the river flows with the blood of the innocent! *2.50*

STAR TREK®: UNLIMITED™ NO. 10
ANDY MANGELS & MIKE MARTIN/RON RANDALL/ART NICHOLS
STAR TREK: UNLIMITED concludes with a story based upon one of the most popular episodes of the Original Series! In "A Piece of the Action," **Captain Kirk** and the **U.S.S. Enterprise** visited the planet **Sigma Iotia II**, a world whose entire culture was based upon the organized crime mobs of Chicago. Now, more than eighty years since Kirk, Spock and McCoy first beamed down, **Captain Jean-Luc Picard** has brought the crew of Star Trek: The Next Generation back to Sigma Iotia II—only to discover that a remarkable change has occurred! *2.99*

MARVEL HEROES

ON SALE MAY 6

DAREDEVIL NO. 377
"FLYING BLIND" PART 2 OF 4
SCOTT LOBBDELL/TOM MORGAN/SCOTT HANNA
Continuing the controversial new story arc written by WIZARD "Top Ten" writer, Scott Lobdell! *1.99*

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CHRIS CLAREMONT/SALVADOR LARROCA/ART THIBERT
The Technet (from the pages of EXCALIBUR) returns to Earth to take custody of what may be the most dangerous living being in the known universe: Franklin Richards! Can Franklin and his sole protector (Reed Richards' old friend **Alyssa Moi**) alert his parents to his plight—or will he be stolen away forever?! *1.99*

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Hot off his starring role in "Spiderhunt" and HEROES FOR HIRE comes the Punisher! Ka-Zar is in New York City—and he's blind, deaf and wanted for murder! So who better to go after the "wild man" than that powerful purveyor of vigilante justice, the **Punisher**?! ... *2.99*

MARVEL TEAM-UP NO. 11 STARRING THE SUB-MARINER & IRON MAN
TOM PEYER & GLENN HERDLING/PAT OLLIFFE/AL WILLIAMSON
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WRAPAROUND COVER BY JOHN ROMITA JR. & KLAUS JANSON
DAN JURGENS/JOHN ROMITA JR./KLAUS JANSON
The final Heroes Return adventure begins as **Thor** makes his dramatic reappearance in the Marvel Universe—and starts his all-new ongoing series with his **first-ever #1 issue**! ... *2.99*

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KURT BUSIEK/GEORGE PÉREZ
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COVER BY MIKE ZECK & BILL SMITH
TERRY KAVANAGH/RAMON BERNADO/IAN AIKEN
Sharon Carter's search for the presumed dead Nick Fury drops her smack dab in the middle of World War II—right among the Howling Commandos! *2.99*

IRON MAN NO. 6
KURT BUSIEK/PATRICK ZIRCHER/ERIC J. CANNON & SEAN PARSONS
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WRAPAROUND COVER BY BERNARD CHANGJOE KELLY/STEVE HARRIS
Who's that strange guy named **Ajax** who's been bumping off **Weapon X** survivors in the last few issues of DEADPOOL? And what does he want with Wade? Whoever he is, Ajax's got Deadpool exactly where he wants him! ... *2.99*

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The critically acclaimed KA-ZAR team reunites as new penciler Andy Kubert jumps onboard for the climactic chapter of "Power and Glory" The **Skrulls** have unleashed paranoia and chaos across America, and **Captain America** can't do a thing about it! Maybe the **Avengers** and the **Fantastic Four** can! *1.99*

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COVER BY PASCUAL FERRY

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The most devastating event in the life of the Hulk. Period. He's been gray. He's been green. He's lost Jim, Jarella and even his own human alter ego. He's been married and separated. When it comes to the Hulk, change is the name of the game. But will he ever recover from this one? *1.99*

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COVER BY CARLOS PACHECO

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Accused of being frauds, and faced with the loss of their charter, the Avengers head to **Project Pegasus** for a showdown with the **Squadron Supreme**! *1.99*

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Continued from DEADPOOL & DEATH '98! In the annual we learned who **Ajax** is and why he's after Wade. Now Deadpool's coming after him, and nothing's gonna stop the merc with a mad-on! We're tellin' ya, kids, this story that **Joe Kelly**'s been cooking up for the summer and fall is going to blow your minds! *1.99*

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The most comprehensive listings for all products coming from the House of Ideas!

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COVER BY CLAUDIO CASTELLINI

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A gangster epic—seen from the point of view of the underworld—which repositions the status of the crimelords of the Marvel Universe!The Kingpin's declaring war, and Spider-Msn and Daredevil are cought in the crossfire! *5.99*

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TODD DEZAGO/MIKE WIERINGO/RICHARD CASE
Look out, Spider-Man, if Arcade's Murderworld doesn't get you, the claws of the Black Cat will! "Identity Crisis" is over and Spider-Man is still a wanted man—but Peter Parker risks it all and once again dons the red-and-blue! *1.99*

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TOM DEFALCO/JOE BENNETT/BUD LAROSA
This is it, Spider-Man vs. the Black Tarantula—and only one of them's walking away! The mysterious Tarantula beat the wall-crawler within an inch of his life during "Spiderhunt," now it's time for a little payback! *1.99*

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MARVEL ANNUAL '98 STARRING: THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN & DEVIL DINOSAUR
WRAPAROUND COVER BY TOM LYLE
TOM DEFALCO/TOM LYLE/ROBERT BROWN
Bigger than Mighty Joe Young! More frightening than Godzilla! Run for your lives! Here comes ... **Devil Dinosaur**?! In the misty reaches of the prehistoric past there strode a mighty creature, a scarlet-scaled beast named **Devil Dinosaur**—his only companion, a young Dawn-man called **Moon-Boy**! Now, stranded in our present era (ever since their appearance in GHOST RIDER #82), the quirky couple that sprang from the mind of Jack Kirby become the star attractions of none other than the **Ringmaster's Circus of Crime**! And when the towering red monster explodes out of the big top and goes on a rampage, even the wondrous web-spinner may not be able to stop him! *2.99*

PETER PARKER, SPIDER-MAN NO. 93
HOWARD MACKIE/JAVIER SALTARES
Like a bat out of Hell, Ghost Rider returns—by the original creative team that made him a fan fave! The screams of the wicked fill the night as the demonic biker runs out of control, exacting vengeance on a multitude of sinners! Can Spidey stop him? *1.99*

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SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN NO. 259
ROGER STERN & GLENN GREENBERG/
LUKE ROSS/DAN GREEN
Back in the pages of Spider-Man: the original Hobgoblin—and Roger Stern! His identity might have been revealed in the HOBGOBLIN LIVES limited series, but mystery still abounds! Who breaks the Hobgoblin out of jail? Will the original Hobgoblin face the original **Green Goblin**? And what does it all have to do with Spider-Man? The new writing team of **Roger Stern** (HOBGOBLIN LIVES) and **Glenn Greenberg** (THE OSBORN JOURNALS) reveals all! *1.99*

X-MEN

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Domino's back, but it's no rest for the wicked as she and **Cable** are thrown head-first into a battle royale against **a brand new villain**! ***1.99***

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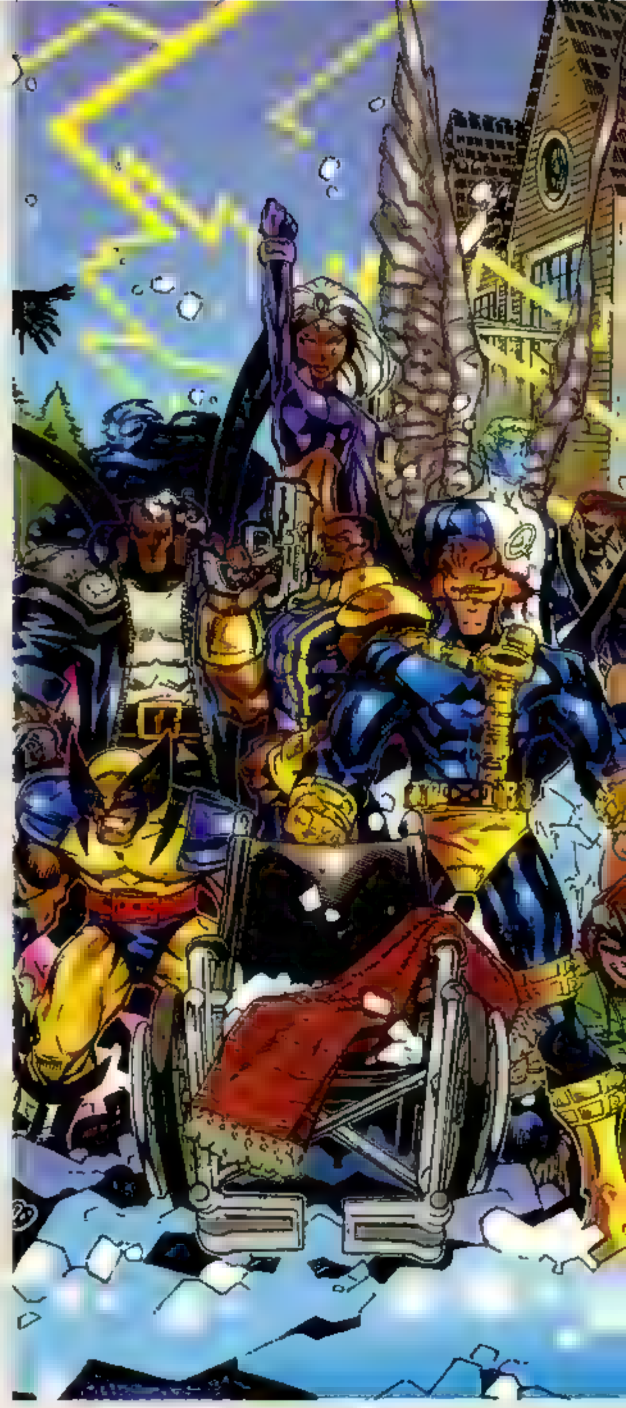
Guest-starring Darkstar, Vanguard & Ursa Major—the former Soviet Super Soldiers! Imprisoned in a Moscow dungeon by **Ivan Pushkin**, **Maverick** and fellow prisoner—the **Red Guardian**—must escape their cell before Pushkin's assault force can launch an attack on an **A.I.M.** fortress! ***1.99***

UNCANNY X-MEN NO. 357
STEVE SEAGLE/DAN NORTON/TIM TOWNSEND

Its the X-Men meets *Twin Peaks* as **Cyclops** and **Jean Grey**—now calling herself **Phoenix**(!)—confront the mystery of a dark shamanistic power in Alaska. ***1.99***



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HOWARD MACKIE/LEE MODER/SCOTT KOBLISH

When a squad of **Mandroids**, led by **Henry Peter Gyrich**, attempt to arrest **Havok** for his "crimes," they find themselves confronting not only their quarry, but Havok's ex-lover, the Mistress of Magnetism, **Polaris**—and she has her very own bone to pick with Havok! ***1.99***

X-MEN VISIONARIES: THE WRITING OF CHRIS CLAREMONT
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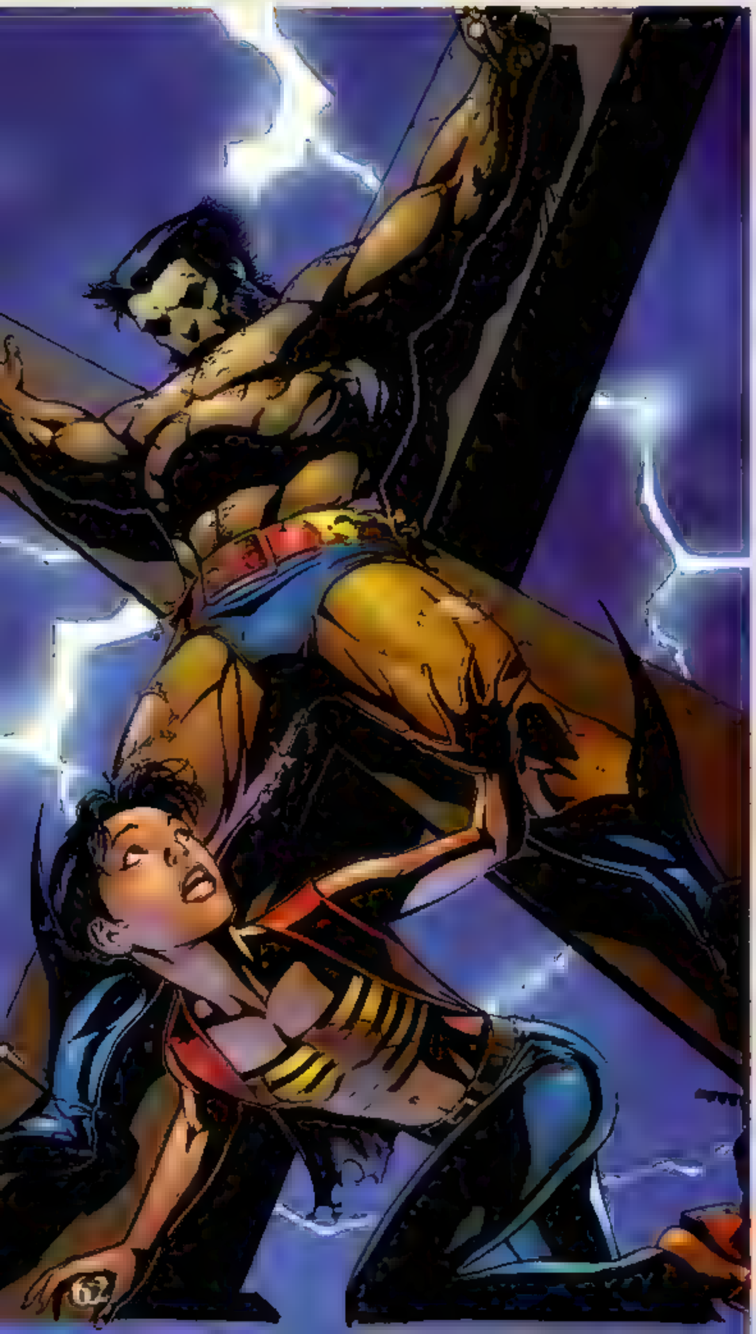
Collecting the finest work of the man who charted some of the greatest X-Men adventures of all time! Chris Claremont's 17 years as the writer of the X-Men is an unparalleled achievement in the history of comics. Under his watch, the X-Men were transformed from a low-selling series that had previously been canceled into the hottest selling comic book for over a decade. Here's the story that did it! ***24.00***



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EXCALIBUR NO. 122
BEN RAAB/TREVOR SCOTT/ROB HUNTER

Nightcrawler, Shadowcat & Colossus vs. ... the original X-Men?! Tracking the missing **Professor X** to a former Hulkbuster base in New Mexico, Excalibur's search is pre-empted when they finally find themselves battling the five original X-Men! What's going on here? 1.99

WHAT IF? NO. 110
STARRING COLOSSUS

BILL ROSEMANN/MEL RUBI/ROB HUNTER

"What If Colossus Had Not Joined The X-Men?" Peter Rasputin leads the soviet super soldiers against the mad mutant called Proteus. Standing in their way, the X-Men! 1.99

X-MAN NO. 40
TERRY KAVANAGH/RICHARD PACE

A bold new direction for X-Man begins here! Up against the power of the **Great Beasts**, Nate forges an uneasy alliance with **Madelyne Pryor!** 1.99

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Guest-starring the Black Panther! It's high-adventure deep in the dangerous jungles of Africa as **Storm** and **Wolverine** are drawn to face ghosts from Orroro's past—as well as a team of Zulu ninjas! 1.99

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Wolverine vs. Sabretooth! Wolverine's luck finallys runs out when he faces the deadliest foe of his life! Okay, we hear you: "But Wolverine's fought Sabretooth about ten bajillion times." Well, bub, never like this! 1.99

X-FORCE NO. 79
JOHN FRANCIS MOORE/ADAM POLLINA

At last, the truth behind Reignfire! Okay, let's get this straight: Sunfire transformed into the vicious Reignfire and betrayed the entire team. Then Bobby DaCosta turned back to normal and the evil identity was forgotten. Then Reignfire popped up again, hot on the trail of X-Force. What's up with that? Find out here as we reveal Reignfire's origin—and his ties to Bobby! 1.99

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